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ORDINARY MEETING.*

D. HOWARD, ESQ., D.L., F.C.S., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed, and the following Elections were announced :—

ASSOCIATES :—Rev. Pres. O. McCutcheon, D.D., Ireland ; F. R. Cowper Reed, Esq., B.A., F.G.S., Cambridgeshire ; J. James Ridge, Esq., M.D., B.S., B.A., B.Sc., Middlesex ; Rev. W. Sealy, M.A., Devonshire ; Rev. J. Tuckwell, Middlesex ; W. Watson Taylor, Esq., Middlesex.

HON. COR. MEMBER :—Rev. C. V. A. Van Dyck, D.D., Pres. Syrian Coll., Beirut.

The following paper was read by the author :—

ITEMS OF CHINESE ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHY.

By Surgeon-General C. A. GORDON, M.D., C.B., Q.H.P., etc.

SYLLABUS.—Preliminary—Moral Philosophy and Ethics—The Sacred Edict—Ancestral Worship—Benevolent Institutions—Laws and Enactments—Punishments—Education—The Liberal Professions—On Witty Compositions—A Charitable Physician.—Chinese Proverbs—Respect for Labour—China in the Present—China in the Future.

PRELIMINARY.

WITH reference to, and partly in continuation of, papers I have had the honour on previous occasions to submit to the VICTORIA INSTITUTE† I express a hope that the remarks I am about to offer may not be deemed altogether inappropriate. The object with which they have been collated and formulated is to exhibit some from among the numerous maxims relating to ethics and philosophy in accordance with which, Chinese civilisation has

* 10th of 29th Session, 7 May, 1894.

† Notes on the "Ethnology and Ancient Chronology of the Chinese." V.I. Trans. vol. xxiii. "Philosophy, &c., in Ancient India." V.I. Trans. vol. xxv.

descended from ancient times even to our own day, and by which the special characteristics of that civilisation have been so definitely established. My present intention, however, is rather to enumerate than to comment upon and criticise those maxims; leaving such a task to others whose proclivities may lead them to undertake it.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

According to Chinese philosophy all morality may be comprised under five heads, namely: duties between parents and children; between prince and subjects; husband and wife; elder and younger brothers; and, lastly, friend to friend.

With regard to these, it is stated on the authority of the sages that "the principle of obedience and submission in which the Chinese are educated from their infancy influences prodigiously their political government, and accustoms the people early to have the most profound veneration for their governors." It accustoms them early to venerate the administrators of the laws, with the very important proviso that this sentiment shall continue—so long as the actions of those authorities "are guided by reason." The rules of *Decorum* as to words and gestures, of which the works by Chinese authors are full, have introduced into the manners of that people a reserve, a complaisance, and a circumspection which prompts them in paying to every person the respect he has a right to require, and induces them to dissemble, or even to stifle a resentment.

1. *The duties of parents and children.* Father and son are enjoined to fulfil their mutual duties without interested views. The duty of a father is to correct the faults of his children; the inclination of a mother leads her to excuse them. Ill-judged indulgence on the part of a mother will result in the falling of her daughters into many errors. Harshness on the part of a father who only speaks to his children to reprove or find fault with them makes them fearful of him, and gives to themselves a painful perplexed air which never leaves them. The true character of a mother is to be compassionate, but without blind indulgence, of a father to correct, but without unreasonable severity. These are the first maxims. Gently instil into a child lessons and instructions; let him not be spoiled by capriciousness, nor punished for trifles; he is as a tender bud from which the

flower will soon appear and flourish. Too great an anxiety about the health of children is an excess into which many parents fall. Has a young child the least indisposition, he is immediately surfeited with medicines and cordials; his constitution thereby ruined, his health impaired, his days shortened.

“When a daughter is born into a family,” so says the code of philosophy now quoted,* “it is to leave it, and soon pass into another.” If then, her education has been neglected, “she is a reproach to her parents, and does a great injury to the family into which she enters.”

Among the duties of a wife which may be appropriately alluded to are these: “To pay a respectful obedience to her father and mother-in-law; to live in perfect union with her sisters-in-law.” [Please to observe we are referring to the Chinese, not to the more advanced condition of such matters in the highly favoured islands of the western seas.] To honour her husband (assuming of course that he is worthy of honour); to instruct her children, to compassionate her domestics (whether slaves or servants); to prepare the silk and fit it for working† (equivalent to attending to the family wardrobe); to be a frugal and laborious housewife; to patiently bear crosses and annoyances; not to listen to tittle tattle, nor meddle with that which is outside her doors—in all of which a daughter should be instructed before marriage.

On the part of a son obedience and respect towards his parents; in other words to “honour his father and his mother,” is held to be the most important of “the five duties of civil life.” If the father treats the son well, the son will behave well towards the father. But though the father is not such as he ought to be, the son should not be wanting in duty towards him,

2. *Duties among brethren.* — According to an ancient (Chinese) proverb, “When brethren live together they ought to support themselves,” there should in fact be no idlers among them. Harmony between brothers and their families is a source of happiness; and among the ways to so maintain it are these:—“to hear a great deal, yet to seem as if one had heard nothing; though seeing many things, yet behave

* See *Du Halde*, vol. ii, pp. 37, *et seq.*

† Equivalent to the duties assigned in olden times to British maidens, whence also the term *spinsters* which still clings to them, though but in name.

as if one had seen nothing; not to let one's thoughts be taken up with trifles." [Maxims still followed by experienced administrators in other countries than China.]

3. *The duties of husband and wife.*—When marriage is being treated of, the principal thing to be regarded is whether there is likely to be sympathy between husband and wife, a point too often disregarded; convenience, rank, position, or ancient family alliances being only thought of. The young bride is sometimes to be pitied; she may come of a wealthy family into one whose affairs are in great disorder; she may see coldness on the part of her husband without daring to complain; she may be near her mother's house, yet unable to see or talk with her, and then, the more she was cherished at her own home, the more she feels her present condition.

"When is it," the question is asked, "that a woman despises her husband?" The answer given is, "When she is puffed up because she has made his fortune," in other words, brought riches to him who had none of his own, whether by inheritance (the *unearned increment*), or as the fruits of his labour. As for the husband, his true character is firmness in maintaining good order in his family.

4. *Of the duty of friends.*—However strict the union between friends may be, a word dropped by chance may offend delicacy. What course shall you follow? Why! dissemble, and let it pass as a trifle; take great care not to give a harsh answer, or to make the first person you meet with the confident of your resentment. Nothing is more easy than for children as they grow up to contract the usages and customs of their parents, who, if they are laborious, industrious, and frugal, the young man will form himself by their examples; and on the contrary, if they are given to vanity, merry-making, and pleasure, he will soon fall into their extravagances. If, from example of his companions, vice shall take root in his young heart, it will be difficult to eradicate it. Therefore, court the company of a wise man. When you pitch upon a friend a hundred good qualities are seen in him at first, but when you are habituated you discover in him a thousand faults. (Few persons stand knowing.) During the lifetime of our acquaintances we speak of nothing but their faults; after their death, nothing but of their praises. He who treats his living friends with the same esteem and affection which he would express for them if dead, will reap great benefits in friendship. My friend, who was in a poor and obscure position, suddenly finds himself in the midst of splen-

dour and plenty. I ought to sound the present disposition of his heart. If I should treat him with my ordinary familiarity it is to be feared that he will give me a very cold reception, so as to keep me at a distance. On the other hand, my friend who was rich may fall into poverty. After such a change of fortune I ought to treat him with greater regard than ever, otherwise he may suspect that I affect an indifference in order to break off all correspondence with him. "Friendships," say the ancients, "that are formed slowly, and without much ceremony, are commonly durable."

5. *Of the duties of kinsmen*.—To disregard or disown kinsmen is great pride and vile ingratitude; to protect them when they need assistance, and succour them in misery is the effect of great virtue. "If I be in a condition to do a poor relation the service which he expects of me, I ought to do it generously, and enhance my good office with the obliging manner of doing it." In such a matter "consult your heart and your abilities, and do the best you can to give assistance." Above all, promise nothing but what you mean to perform. How are mutual misunderstandings between relations and neighbours to be guarded against? It is by bearing with each other, and remembering that if your friend has some troublesome qualities you have the same which he must pardon in his turn. But if he pretends to domineer in every little dispute, that is the way to perpetuate feuds and enmities. If in company you boast of being akin to a rich and dignified relation, and speak of a poor, despised, and ragged kinsman in contemptuous terms, as *my beggarly cousin*, etc., and seem to disdain a relation because he is in misery—how shameful is this. How many do we see who build temples, entertain in their houses companies of frivolous people, who spare nothing in play and self-indulgence, yet grudge the smallest sum to meet the necessities of an indigent kinsman. The wheel of fortune is in continual rotation. Can you promise to be a long time prosperous, or shall your now despised relations be always in misery? May not they in their turns mount to high offices and dignities? May not your children and grandchildren, when you are gone, stand in need of their assistance; then what services can they expect from those about whom you have been so indifferent. [From this last quoted maxim the fact seems manifest that in ancient times conditions in China were not so very dissimilar from those indicated by the Cheshire modern proverb to the effect that "it is only three generations from clog to clog."]

Following the enumeration of ethical principles from which the above rather copious extracts have been taken are others the bare enumeration of which must here suffice, namely: On the government of the heart; accomplished behaviour; love of learning; the conduct of an honest man; the manner of governing the house; caution necessary in our discourse; duties of private life; perseverance in good works; manner of behaving in life; and so on.

THE SACRED EDICT.

Towards the end of the year 1671, and in the reign of K'ang-Hsi, second emperor of the present dynasty, a code of ethics, derived from experience, handed down from ancient times, was published for general guidance throughout the empire, the express object in view being "to humanise the sentiments of the people, and to stimulate them to virtue." Sixteen different maxims are laid down in "the Sacred Edict,"* for such is the title given to the code in question, and these may here be briefly alluded to as follows, namely:—

1. "Practice sincerely filial piety and fraternal love, and thus give support to social relations" [to which are appended explanatory notes of what is intended to be the special obligations so implied, including dignity of manner, loyalty, considerate demeanour towards others, bravery in battle, etc.]

2. "Maintain the bonds of relationship, and so render manifest concord and union." Every person should pay consideration to those immediately near him, even as he attends to "the four members and the hundred parts of his body, of which the (blood) vessels should communicate with each other and so be mutually affected whether under affliction or pain." [In other words, "Love thy neighbour as thyself."]

3. "Live in peace with your neighbours," and so avoid litigation. To which the commentator adds: "Concord between relations, good understanding between allies, fidelity between friends, and charity:—let these be always held in honour."

4. "Hold in honour agriculture and care of the mulberry tree, and so assure both food and raiment"—these two essentials of the people. In ancient times the sons of Heaven tilled the ground with their own hands, while

* *Le Saint Edit*, par Théophile Piry. Shanghai, 1879.

empresses personally attended to the mulberry trees. As for soldiers, "they have not to deal with agriculture, but inasmuch as every thread of their clothing, every grain of their rice, as also their pay are all raised by the people, so they should live in peace with the population, and in every way protect them, so that they may live and conduct their labours in peace." Further commentary says, "Molest the indolent and lazy; recompense the industrious workman; let no field remain unused; let no vagabond be in your cities; if crops are abundant let there be no prodigality, nor neglect to keep back a reserve."

5. "Prize order and economy, and save out of your riches," so as at a later period to meet unforeseen expenses. "Riches are like the water; economy like the embankments by which it is contained. Interest on borrowed money speedily equals the capital, and as the debt thus increases, hunger and cold can no longer be averted. Live in peace, content with your lot; the mouth full, the stomach satisfied, and so realize the supreme object of your desires—the improvement of manners, and reform of the people."

6. "Extol university education with the object of directing the studies of the lettered classes." But let the man of letters be in demeanour and costume a pattern to his fellow citizens; let him learn to respect the rites of justice, and carefully preserve the codes of decency and honour; avoid being carried away by high theories to the neglect of individual duties. The glory of a university depends much upon the maintenance by its chief of the rules relating to order and discipline; but still more so upon the care with which the student watches over himself and his good name. The savant and the labourer have not two separate destinies; he who labours with his hands, who searches for, and applies to his own use true principles, is also a savant.

7. "Disparage every foreign sect, and so exalt the orthodox doctrines" [namely, those pertaining to China]. Man has but to follow the established rules of daily conduct, conform to social relations and to the fundamental virtues; but the search after the unknown, and the practice of the marvellous are not admitted by the pious philosophers. As for books which are not the works of philosophers, and non-conformist rituals, these terrify generations, and deteriorate public manners. Three religions have come down from the ancients, and beyond the School of Letters (Confucianism) there still exist the sects of Taoism and Buddhism. As to

the Western doctrine which exalts the Master of Heaven it is equally contrary to the orthodoxy of the (Chinese) sacred Books; it is only because its apostles are deeply versed in mathematics that the State employs, but does not acknowledge them. False doctrines which deceive the crowd are not excused by the law, and punishments are decreed against the charlatans who practise such dangerous artifices—and more to similar effect.

[The limits within which such a Paper as the present must of necessity be restricted render it impossible to enlarge upon the considerations presented in this paragraph. It is, however, of so great interest, more especially in relation to work being carried on in China by many devoted Christian missionaries that, according to my individual opinion, it may appropriately be taken up either before this Institute or by some other kindred society.]

8. "Explain the laws, so that the ignorant and the obdurate may be warned." Though the significance of the laws is profound, their purpose is in conformity with the human sentiment; but in place of punishment after crime, better is it to give warning in advance, for which reason, public proclamation of the laws is ordered to be made from time to time.

9. "Show the excellence of rites (ceremonies) and of decorum." Although the universality of man possesses by nature the five cardinal virtues, yet among individuals so many differences exist as between politeness and rudeness, slowness and vivacity, in the manifestation of passions and desires, coarseness and refinement, that wise men of old established rites and formalities in the observance of which all men should be equal. Then follow minute details in respect to them—the ultimate object in view that, "the public manners being tempered by charity and softened by justice, may be rendered generous and pure."

10. "Apply yourself to occupations such as are essential to determine your position in life." Seeing that "the Superior Heavens" give to man his being, and assign to each individual a definite position, in which it rests with him to establish himself; that in human nature there exists marked differences, as between wisdom and simplicity, strength and weakness, there is no person who may not seek for a position in which to secure himself. Whether as men of letters, cultivators, artisans, tradesmen or soldiers—whatever be the differences of your several conditions, you have all your

obligations to fulfil, and in that respect you are all alike. On application depends success of labour; on diligence, increase of possessions. Then follow special maxims for each of the several classes enumerated, by the practice of which it is added, "no person need again fail in their essential duties; but while fulfilling their duties in accordance with the traditional condition of their families, transmit to their descendants riches and abundance, their own ultimate reward being comfortable enjoyment under a resplendent heaven and a pure sun."

11. "Instruct the young, that so they may be prevented from committing evil." From ancient times this was effected partly by means of scholastic education, partly by military training. [But apparently this particular maxim contains only such instructions as apply to boys and men, to the exclusion of daughters.] To the father and elder brothers pertain the task of developing virtuous inclinations in the young, and of suppressing vicious instincts. As for thoughts of filial tenderness, and of respect to elders, "every man possesses these, implanted in himself." If he love virtue the village child may rise to nobility and grandeur; if not virtuous, the son of the high noble will fall to mediocrity and shame.

12. "Suppress false accusations, and so safeguard innocence." [Equivalent to command against "False Witness."] As examples of such accusations, the following are enumerated, namely, "Plotting in secret; false statements under the guise of truth; raising discord; casting upon another blame which attaches to one's self; mixing the good with the bad, the just with the unjust, and so creating an erroneous impression—in the phraseology of the Edict itself, "calling up a shadow, or binding the wind."

13. "Report harbourers of deserters, so that they may be stopped in the practice, and implicated in the crime." Herein is included an epitome of duties pertaining to the military classes, and of the deceptions practised by deserters (whose numbers in former times were evidently very considerable) to conceal their identity. "Between the master and the servant there exist great mutual obligations, and the fugitive who turns his back on his master abandons his contract."

14. "Be exact in payment of your taxes, including those which are devoted to official ceremonies, as also the hundred other secondary expenses. A prince must necessarily levy

all his expenses upon his people, and it is a duty for the inferiors to offer them to their superiors. The granaries and treasury of a prince wherewith to feed his people in time of dearth, could they exist were the object of taxation no other than to plague the people, and to supply his own wants? To levy with mildness, to demand little by little, and to be liberal in benefits to the multitude are the virtues of a prince. To serve superiors, to consider public affairs rather than private interests are the duties of 'the masses.' But in order that you may pay your taxes, play not with idleness, it will render sterile your works; be not extravagant, nor dissipate your riches."

15. "Organise yourselves in communities with a view to exterminate brigandage and theft." Such communities have consisted from ancient times, first of ten families (a *Chia*) over which a dean, then ten of those united (a *Pao*) under a chief [otherwise so many village systems with their respective office bearers]. Among other instructions under this head, the following is noteworthy. "In towns and cities persons are to be met with who, instead of occupying themselves with honest work assemble together to drink, to play, to fight cocks, and race their dogs, some meeting in the evening and not dispersing till dawn, their antecedents obscure, their movements doubtful." Against such as these this maxim contains precise instructions, whether on shore, or in fleets occupied by them on rivers,* and at sea as pirates.

16. "Moderate your dislikes, so that you may take count of the value of life." Man has a body in order that he may fulfil his essential duties, to cultivate the land, to serve his father and mother, and nourish his wife and children. But by nature he has his crosses which he can neither change nor get rid of. If he once gives way to his "instincts," and they are so let loose, he may try in vain to get them again under control; anger may arise in an instant, and become an inveterate hatred (between two persons) seeking mutual vengeance, ruin, or murder, the cause insignificant, the evil immense. The Heart of Heaven and Earth loves the life in its creatures, but many thoughtless persons know not how to take care of themselves, and treat life with frivolity. If we seek for the causes to which are due the great misfortunes of life, we find the most frequent to be the abuse of wine; of ten murders, five or six result

* That is, the regular river population whose home from time immemorial has been their boats.

from mutual injuries while under "the empire of wine," while worse still the evils affect their wives and children, and extend among their surroundings. Therefore correct yourself so that hasty action in a moment of anger may not bring remorse in the future. "Know how to bear for a moment," says the (Chinese) proverb, and "and so safeguard your own person." Finally, it is added, "Follow these lessons, handed down from ancient sages through thousands of years, that in peace and prosperity you may advance along the path of humanity and of long life."

These then are examples taken from the code of ethics in accordance with which the teeming millions, which compose the population of China, have lived and flourished, while elsewhere nations and peoples have sprung into history, advanced, culminated, and disappeared; and still the Chinese are active, and in a particular sense "progressive."

ANCESTRAL WORSHIP.

From a date coeval with and probably anterior to that of the prophet Samuel, B.C. 1139-1061,* Ancestral worship has been looked upon by the Chinese as a sacred rite; at some of the festivals connected therewith, the dead being personated by a younger relative who was supposed to be taken possession of by the spirit of the departed, and thereby become his visible image. A hall of ancestors exists either in or immediately adjoining the house of every member of a family, but more especially in that of the elder son. Tablets to the deceased, bearing suitable inscriptions, are therein arranged in chronological order, incense and papers are daily burned before them, accompanied by a bow or other act of homage on the part of the worshiper, forming in fact a sort of family prayer. In the first part of April, one hundred and six days after the winter solstice, a general worship of ancestors is observed under the euphonious name of "worshiping on the hills"† or "sweeping the tombs;" sacrifices and libations, candles, papers, and incense for burning being then offered, while the people go through a variety of ceremonies, and offer prayers. The graves are at the same time swept and repaired. These observances are described as indicating more nearly than anything else connected with the people an approach to a veritable religious sense among them.

* Reign of TE-YEH, 27th emperor of 2nd or Shang Dynasty.

† The sides of hills being favourite sites of sepulchre.

Even to a stranger there is something in the ceremonies alluded to which is calculated to attract his respectful attention, nor can the foreign onlooker avoid a hope that the merits of the ancestors so honoured were such in life as to deserve the veneration so manifested at the tombs and temples dedicated to their memory. As to the actuating sentiment of which the observances in question are the outcome, it seems to me akin to that which in western lands finds expression in monuments such as ornament cathedrals and churches, and in more humble manner strews periodically with flowers the graves of those whom we had loved. Is not also the sentiment from which originated genealogy and heraldry similar to that out of which sprung ancestral worship in China?

BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS.

As a result of the several codes of ethics and of morals under which their character as a people has been moulded throughout the long period of their history, the Chinese have from very ancient times manifested their sympathy with suffering and destitution, by means of institutions the object of which has been, to supply particular classes of persons with their special requirements. The gentry often subscribe towards publishing and disseminating as advertisements, exhortations to the masses of the people to lead a moral and virtuous life. In the larger towns commemorative arches and gateways are erected in honour of widows and other persons whose virtue was conspicuous. While the methods of collecting the regular poor rate are direct and economical, they are so regulated as to offer no rewards to idlers and tramps. In some of the most important cities (among them Peking) some empty granaries are placed at the disposal of beggars and the extreme poor, to be utilised by them as gratuitous lodgings.

In former times there existed throughout the empire granaries into which a specified proportion of grain had to be deposited periodically, and so a reserve kept up to meet the requirements of famine seasons. In such emergencies gratuitous distribution of rice and other kinds of food, and of clothing took place under orders of the government. Soup kitchens are established under charitable organisations, and by private individuals, and to certain classes of persons food is sold at cost price. In times of pestilence persons are

permitted to witness gratuitously theatrical performances, and displays of fireworks, the object being that their minds may be distracted thereby from the prevailing epidemic. In the larger towns there exist hospitals for the aged and infirm, and also for orphans, for the blind, and for lepers. Societies for the prevention of infanticide are common all over the empire, as also for recovering the drowning, and for the burial decently of pauper dead. There are hospices into which are received not only deserted children but those of very poor parents, who are voluntarily given up by them permanently or for a time. With regard to the latter, it sometimes happens that children who are voluntarily parted with, as in times of severe famine, or inability on the part of their parents to provide them with food, are again claimed when the particular emergency has passed away. In such instances their legal right to their own children is at once acknowledged by such institutions, and they are handed back to them.* It has been asserted that fewer children die in the Chinese orphanages than in those of certain French establishments in China, for the reason that they are better nursed and cared for. In the large cities places are provided in which those who in desperation give up the battle of life may quietly lay themselves down to die.† At one time societies with that object in view afforded the necessary aid to such as desired to "sacrifice themselves to the manes of their ancestors," otherwise to commit suicide at their tombs, under the belief that illness is caused by maleficent spirits of the dead. A yearly service is performed, called *Foo-ying-k'ow* or "appeasing the burning mouths" with the object of conciliating those spirits.

LAWS AND ENACTMENTS.

Such as the laws of China were when codified during the period of the Chow dynasty (B.C. 1122-255) so in substance have they continued down to the present day, with but inconsiderable modifications. This penal code so come down from high antiquity has been described as "remarkable for

* In the case of Roman Catholic orphanages it would appear that a similar rule does not obtain. In them children who have been once baptized are not restored to parents or relations. Hence, it is said, arose the misunderstanding which in 1870 led to the massacre of French priests and nuns at Tientsin.

† In 1860 I saw one such place in the city of Shanghai.

its reasonableness, clearness, and consistency, for its business-like brevity, the directness of its provisions, and for the moderation of the language in which they are expressed. In spirit the law does not countenance some of the customs that disgrace humanity in China, notably infanticide, where that crime exists; neither does it countenance the atrocities of which, at various periods of history, governors and princes have been guilty.

There is no public ministry connected with the state tribunals, nor are lawyers employed, as among western nations, except in cases of murder. The plaintiffs or defendants state their own cases, or cause them to be explained by others, and the magistrate, assisted by two assessors, pronounces an equitable judgment; the decisions are public and the audience is said to be occasionally consulted.* In the more ordinary cases complaints are adjudicated by the families of those concerned, only the graver ones come before magistrates.

It is argued in China that men cannot properly be punished for what they do not know; also that they will be less liable to incur penalty if they are duly made acquainted with the prohibition. Accordingly, the sixteen discourses already referred to as "the Sacred Edict" are periodically read to the people. This is what has been called *preventive* justice, in contradistinction to *punitive* justice.

Historians observe the remarkable fact that the following maxim by the Chinese is often quoted by themselves, namely, that "to violate the law is the same crime in the emperor as in a subject." In the administration of the law the principle is held that "it is better to let even the guilty escape than to punish the innocent."

By an ancient custom of the empire, specially appointed *Censors* are privileged to present any advice or recommendation to the sovereign. But in practice punishment has been awarded them when their advice was unpalatable to the ruler. The persons so appointed seem to be altogether in a different position from that of Ministers of State.

PUNISHMENTS.

Among the Chinese the punishment attached to the greater crimes is death. For those of less atrocity they are of various degrees of severity, but all exceeding

* That is, it becomes collectively a jury if so consulted. But on this point statements differ.

those awarded in Europe for crimes of corresponding magnitude. In addition also to the punishment directly inflicted on the immediate culprit, his dependents and family suffer disgrace and ruin, and in all cases the evil repute of the father descends to the sons.

Confession by the guilty party is indispensable before the penalty of death is pronounced, and a criminal is often returned to, and kept in prison until he confesses, although such a course is not actually legal.

A third conviction for certain crimes, including theft of a sum equal to £8 sterling, rape, adultery, and murder, are punished with death. An accessory is punished with the same rigor as the principal. Political crimes are considered as the greatest of all; the more serious of these are punished with death, often of a cruel kind, those of minor degree by transportation to Ili, the Chinese "Siberia."

All death sentences must receive the sanction of the emperor who, it is said, observes a fast of three days before examining them.

A peculiarity of Chinese punishments is that under particular circumstances they may be vicariously inflicted; another, that legal suicide is a recognised institution.

In spite of the professed rigor of the law, death sentences are believed to be relatively rare. Provinces of corresponding size to England and Wales have not more than from twelve to fourteen a year, and in some others equally large, none have been pronounced for several consecutive years.

EDUCATION.

A system of national education has existed in China from very ancient times, the system at present in force having been substituted in the fourteenth century of our era* for that previously followed. According to the ideal of education which has come down from such distant date in that great empire—the true end of study is virtue. To this ideal a scholar should apply all his forces in the same manner as he who draws a bow aims at a mark. But "above all things young people must be prohibited from reading romances, comedies, verses, or obscene songs; these books corrupt the heart insensibly, and contribute to the loss of good manners. It is a shameful thing ever to have read them

* Namely, by Houng woo, founder of the Ming Dynasty, A.D. 1368-1398.

with pleasure; and bad discourse, if it enter into the ear of a young scholar remains all his life after in his heart.*

On the subject of education of young men the principles laid down in "the Book of Rites" are to the following effect, namely, "When able to talk, lads must be taught to answer in a quick bold tone, and girls in a slow gentle one. At the age of seven boys should be taught to count and name the cardinal points. At eight they must be taught to wait for their superiors, and to prefer others to themselves. At ten they must be sent abroad to private tutors, and there remain day and night, studying writing and arithmetic, wearing plain apparel, learning to demean themselves in a manner becoming their age, and acting with sincerity of purpose. At thirteen they must attend to music and poetry. At fifteen they are to practice archery and charioteering. At the age of twenty they are in due form to be admitted to the rank of manhood, and learn additional rules of propriety; be careful in the performance of filial and fraternal duties, and though they possess extensive knowledge they must not affect to teach others. At thirty they may marry, and begin the management of business. At forty they may enter the service of the State, and if their prince maintain the reign of reason they must serve him, but otherwise not. At fifty they may be promoted to the rank of ministers; and at seventy they must retire from public life."

And what are the results assigned to the system of education in China? That the general prosperity and peace of that vast country have been very much promoted thereby. It is especially deserving of notice that among the hundreds of millions who constitute that empire almost every man can read and write sufficiently for the ordinary purposes of life.

So sensible are the people of the advantages of education that their language is full of maxims in reference to it, such as "Bend the mulberry tree when it is young." "Without education in families, how are governors for the people to be obtained," and so on. Every town has its public place of instruction, and wealthy families have private tutors. Education is made as general as possible, that which is moral being put far beyond what is merely physical, although the latter is by no means neglected.

Coming down to almost the present day, it may be interesting in this place to advert to the principles of

* *Du Halde*, vol. i, p. 383.

education dictated by TSENG KUO-FAN the father of the late Marquis TSENG, a recent honoured representative in this metropolis and country. The principles so indicated were these [applicable to women and girls, as well as boys and men], namely:—1. Preparedness for examinations. 2. Weaving. 3. Early rising. 4. Cleanliness within and outside the house. 5. Reading. 6. The culture of vegetables. 7. The care of fish and of swine.* Thus we perceive an acquaintance with subjects in certain countries looked upon as menial, holds in China a place with such as are comprised in the highest order of education.

[In relation to this part of the general subject I may, within parentheses, allude to the most recent report published on the substitution of the method of education described in the preceding paragraphs, by that which finds favour in our own country, the place in which this took place being our Chinese colony of Hong Kong. According to the report in question, "As regards education, we deeply regret that we cannot sympathise with those to whom it seems the panacea for all ills—native or foreign. No greater mistake was ever made by the undoubtedly well-meaning but sadly mistaken officials who have during the past two decades controlled the destinies of our Eastern colonies than their support of the Education fad, which has so utterly spoiled the lower classes in this country. To teach the small Chinese or the small Briton the Three R's is commendable enough. To teach him more is to unfit the pupil for all that is known as menial work. The result, in Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements, is not to raise a race of intelligent servants or artisans, but one whose members despise all but 'genteel' employments, Clerkships—Government clerkships, if possible, but clerkships, at any rate—are alone sought by the little Orientals, whose fathers were happy to earn a few cash daily for many a long hour of work. Who cares to become a 'boy' coolie, or godown-keeper, when he can rival the young European in writing and book keeping, knows history,

* *New China and Old*, by Archdeacon Moule, p. 151. Apropos to the above the following comment on a treatise on land law pertaining to Cheshire 50 years ago is given, as in its spirit nearly approaching the principles here laid down, namely:—"Man to the plow, wife to the cow, son to the mow, girl to the sow, and the rent was netted." And its counterpart:—"Man tallyho, girl piano, son Greek and Latin, wife silk and satin, and—the farmer gazetted." But China's yeomen and their families are a long way behind the condition so indicated.

geography, and mathematics twice as well, and not infrequently can beat him at English composition? Thanks to faddists, we are doing our best to destroy the chances of the average British boy by educating native youngsters, who will take half the salary and live on a quarter of the sum deemed necessary by a British youth. The 'educational needs' of the Chinaman are about met by the native 'Sin sang'—if he is to remain in his present position, *quod* the European. If he is to fulfil his apparent destiny of supplanting the latter in both the east and west, education must, of course, have full swing. But we hardly think the world, or at all events, Great Britain, is as yet ripe for this policy."]

THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS.

The professions termed liberal in Europe, are in China on the same level as handicrafts, the members of both receiving remuneration according to a similar scale. Thus the occupations of life are reduced to two categories, namely, those connected with the Mandarinate (official classes), and those relating to trade. The first-named of these is open by means of competitive examination to all classes with four exceptions* ; and in various instances its members voluntarily reverting to the second,

SCIENCE AND LETTERS.

Above the equality of handicrafts and professions however stand pre-eminently professors of science and letters, for nowhere are they respectively more highly honoured than in China, where old age is the only qualification placed on a level with them. Some members of these two classes become tutors, public writers, professors, &c.; others turn to commerce and agriculture, and in these various capacities contribute to raise the intellectual standard of the people. But alas! of some it is stated that "they prefer to await a chance, looking out for someone's disgrace and dismissal—intriguing like the unclassed, and becoming perfect pests"—loafers in fact! objecting to, or incapable of honest handicrafts.

* Namely, descendants within three generations of prostitutes, actors, executioners, and jailors.

ON WITTY COMPOSITIONS.

With reference to books by literary men—It is declared to be a dangerous affair to make comedies, romances, verses, or other witty composition where, in enigmatical, dark terms, the most eminent reputations are attacked. If such compositions are communicated to you, take care not to discover that you have seen them. A man, after long and serious reading should rather apply himself to a search into the secrets of Nature, politics, or the art of rightly governing the people” (rather than such pursuits as are above alluded to). “I cannot endure”—so the dissertation* runs—“certain expressions that are scattered through some books and which never should be employed by an author who values himself upon knowledge and politeness.” But “I do not blame a man for using terms that best testify gratitude and modesty.” Now, the writer despondingly adds—“the fine sentiments which our sages have transmitted to us are no longer laid before the reader, authors study only to divert and amuse agreeably by witty strokes. Where is the advantage of such writings?”—It is not my present object to inquire as to what extent these observations apply to other peoples than the Chinese to whom they were primarily addressed.

A CHARITABLE PHYSICIAN.

The following seems suitable for quotation in this place, viz. : In the “Collection of Maxims, Reflections, and Examples of Morality” allusion occurs to the characteristics of “a charitable physician,” namely:—“YEN YANG had by his application rendered himself a very skilful physician; but it was with a view to exercise his profession in charity. He not only never refused his medicines to any who asked them for their diseases, but if the patient was poor he also gave him some charity that he might procure the necessary aids in his sickness.” A second instance was that of KIN KO—“a physician of great skill, to which he added great disinterestedness and an uncommon charity. Whoever called him he immediately ran to assist them, and this at all times. He saved the lives of a vast many poor children, and he had a singular talent for this. If any poor patient stood in need

* *Du Halde*, vol. ii, p. 67.

of *jin seng*,* or any more costly remedy he furnished it at his own expense; he thereby saved the lives of a great number of poor people." From which the fact appears that in China, as elsewhere, charity and philanthropy were personified in the worthy professor of the art of healing.

CHINESE PROVERBS.

Allusion has already been made to some out of many maxims by which the Chinese are supposed to regulate their life and conduct, or to refer to, as in other countries, doubtless for no other purpose than to round a sentence in conversation. A few only of these may now be given, namely:

According to LAOTSE, the EPICURUS of China, "Let us drink while we have wine; the sorrows of to-morrow may be borne to-morrow." In other words, "Dum vivimus, vivamus." And yet as a fact the Chinese enjoy the reputation of being temperate as regards both wine and spirits. [Laotse flourished about B.C. 604; Epicurus, B.C. 342-271. Contrast both with St. Luke, A.D. 55-70. See his Gospel, chap. XII, 16-21.†]

"If the blind lead the blind they will both fall into the pit." Of which a counterpart is to be met with among all nations, ancient‡ and modern.

"One thread does not make a rope, nor one swallow a summer." Identical in respect to the last clause with our common English saying.

"Good iron is not used for nails; ivory is not made of rat's teeth, nor soldiers of good men." The final part of this saying being, as everybody knows, totally inapplicable to those of Britain.

"To climb a tree to catch a fish." Misdirected labour.

"Like cuckoo in a magpie's nest." To take unfair advantage of another's work.

"An old man marrying a young wife is like a withered willow sprouting."

"When the tree falls the monkeys flee." (Rats leave a sinking ship.)

"Prevention is better than cure"§ (an universal proverb).

* Root of *Panax quinquefolia*, an esteemed and costly drug.

† "Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

‡ See St. Matthew's Gospel, xv, 14.

§ *Middle Kingdom*, Williams, vol. i, p. 720, *et seq.*

“Doubt and distraction on earth; the brightness of truth in heaven.”

“Better the upright with poverty, than debased with abundance.”

“Better not be than be nothing.”

“The life of the aged is like a candle between two doors, easily blown out,”

“The blind have the best ears, the deaf the best eyes.”

“He who is willing to inquire will excel, but the self-confident will fail,”

“Anger, like a little fire, if not quickly checked may burn down a lofty pile.”

“Too much lenity leads to crime.”

“If you love your son give him the rod; if you hate him pamper him with dainties.”

“The higher the rat creeps up the cow's horn the narrower he finds it.”

The following has reference to a very numerous and somewhat ostentatious class of persons—let us say for the sake of euphony—in China, namely:—“He who bestows his benefits upon those at a distance to the neglect of those immediately near him is like a man who raises his lamp on a high pole; it is seen from a distance, but underneath is dark”; of which a Spanish counterpart is that “Darkness is densest under the lamp.”

The author of the following betrays therein the result of his association with “the world.” He who withdraws to the side of the waterfall and of the purling stream among the mountains, returns to the original goodness of his nature. (According to the doctrine of Confucius man was born good; it was by association with his fellows that he fell away from his high estate.)

Lastly, as I began this short series of “wise saws” with an allusion to wine, so also I conclude, namely:—“A thousand friends will drink your wine when fortune's sun shines bright; none remains to sympathise when falls disaster's night.” Regarding which I refrain from comment.

RESPECT FOR LABOUR.

Respect for labour is a cardinal principle in Chinese ethics. With that people labour is held to be the natural inheritance of man, as it is of all created beings. It is a condition of nature, and the essence of man. “It is a necessity; but

when its end is not understood it becomes a punishment." Labour, whether manual or mental, is held to be the duty as it is the privilege of man. From times the most ancient this has been so; agitators and others who oppress the workers have been execrated, while the national characteristics alluded to continue even to our own day. "To stop the hand is the way to stop the mouth." Such is the teaching of a Chinese familiar proverb. In a country where the youngest cannot afford to be idle, there is observable among the young an air of staid gravity quite beyond their years, the reason being that they are early under obligation to take their parts in the serious business of life. Man, according to Chinese philosophy, is from the nature of his being, a creator and a worker. The sure way of ennobling labour is to show its intimate agreement with natural laws; but the operation of these laws must not be set at nought by other laws, civil or political. Hence, the moderation of the taxes, and the property system which grants the labourer the value of all he has created; the freedom and honour accorded to labour and the labourer; the absence throughout the land of persons independent of labour, of the luxurious classes, and of slaves or serfs.

In certain industries it is a common custom for the masters to associate their principal workmen with themselves by giving them a share of the profits, while others adopt the system of piece work. Fixed wages are unusual in industrial or agricultural work; and the greater number of individuals and families work for their own direct benefit instead of being salaried.

According to a Chinese song, "When the sun begins his course I set myself to labour; when he descends below the horizon I sink into the arms of sleep. I quench my thirst from my own well; I feed on the fruits of my own fields. What can I gain or lose by the power of the emperor?"*

The influence of doctrines such as these, by hereditary descent through many generations, has been to stereotype in Chinese character a fitness for steady industry and perseverance, which, when accompanied as for the most part it is by extreme frugality of habits, renders the individual thus trebly endowed, the dangerous and often successful competitor in industry, which the Chinaman has

* Abbé Grosier, vol. ii, p. 378.

proved himself to be. In his own country, and more especially in some of its largest cities, it is no uncommon thing to see one portion of a family of artisans pursuing their special occupation throughout the entire hours of daylight, other members take up the same work at nightfall, to continue it till morning; and so on uninterruptedly, for they know not the Sunday's rest.

[There are a good many restrictions upon labour in China which working men in western countries would not care to submit to. Combinations of working men are recognised by law; in fact they are to a certain extent insisted upon, and a man who does not belong to some union or other finds difficulty in getting work, except in special skilled handicrafts. Labour troubles and distress due to a congested state of the local labour market are unknown. Indeed, trouble of any kind is rarely experienced, for labourers are strictly confined to the districts where they are employed. They are allowed to go where they please; but no labourer can be employed outside the boundary of his own district. He may, upon making application to the labourers of another locality, be allowed to join them, but it must be by general consent of the majority. In that case he is transferred, and may not then work in the former district to which he belonged. This arrangement is found to work extremely well. It prevents the swarming of unskilled labour into markets already supplied, and yet allows of transfer from one part to another where the resident workers are not opposed to the new comer. It may not suit western notions of perfect freedom, but the result, summed up by the United States Consul—"Trouble is rarely experienced and strikes never occur"—is one that many western states would give a good deal to secure within their own borders.]

CHINA IN THE PRESENT.

Although the great empire to which the preceding remarks more directly apply has been slow to adopt the policy of what in western nations is called progress, it has been by no means stagnant. For example, the gradual introduction of literature which tends to explain the science and leading features of social life in other countries must of necessity affect the train of thought by which during some thousands of years past, the ruling classes and the people

in general have been educated. A few other innovations may be simply enumerated. These include the adoption of warlike appliances according to European models and plans, European machinery and factories, ship-building, docks and arsenals, the manufacture of guns and ammunition, the establishment of a regular fleet of mercantile vessels, the electric telegraph from north to south, and from east to west across the empire, a mint (at Canton) for the manufacture of dollars, and at this moment a medical college is being organised at Tientsin. Mining for metals and coal has moreover been extended throughout the empire, and emigration on a large scale is in progress to Manchuria where colonies of Chinese cultivators are being established.*

CHINA IN THE FUTURE.

But it is recognised that China's progress is beset by difficulties and dangers, some so serious in import that it is to be hoped their significance may be recognised by the responsible authorities ere the clouds now threatening burst upon her. The chief of the difficulties thus alluded to are considered, with more or less reason, to arise from the following circumstances, namely: Her merely passive political existence is at an end; she is now in contact with the three great western powers (Russia, France, and England)—all superior to herself, and looked upon by each other as restless and over-reaching, hence she must either resolutely knit herself together or run the risk of being broken up. Whether there be nerve and public virtue enough in those authorities to enable them to play the new part so indicated remains to be seen. Should the future prove that they are not, then, China is destined to undergo a process of dismemberment and compression, not sudden or violent, but inevitable.† What are the means by which such a catastrophe may be most readily and effectually delayed, or altogether prevented? That she should be roused to the necessity of forming closer relations than at present exist, between her and the two nations which have the least desire of promoting their own interests at the expense of her disintegration. And what are these two nations? On the one hand the United States of America, on the other England.

* See *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1889.

† *Asiatic Quarterly*, D. Boulger.

The CHAIRMAN (D. HOWARD, Esq., F.C.S., D.L., &c.)—I am sure all must have listened with much interest to this paper on the important subject of Chinese Ethics and Philosophy. Apparently it is an almost bottomless well of information and thought to those who study the subject.

I am glad to see some present who can speak on the subject. Perhaps Sir Thomas Wade will commence the discussion.

Sir THOMAS F. WADE, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.*—I should like to congratulate first the meeting upon the paper to which we have just listened, and then ourselves upon the increase of attention which is now being aroused to the needs of that great country to which the paper refers.

The author has collected into an extremely compact essay an extraordinary amount of reading. It must have taken, I am sure, years to bring together all that he has set before us.

I should recommend that we should begin to rely upon more modern compilers than Du Halde, remarkable authority as was this Jesuit father, to whom and to whose fellow workmen we really owe all that we once knew about China; for it is only during the last fifty years that we have got into contact with that shut-up country. I trust I shall not give offence if I endeavour in some instances to supplement what has fallen from the author; if I venture to move some amendments to some of his propositions. I should incline to say that instead of comprising the whole of Chinese philosophy under the five heads of the deities enumerated, we should rather commence with the five virtues to which those five sets of deities are intended to give effect. There is not, however, a direct relation in the numbers. The number five, has, for philosophic reasons, a very special attraction to the Chinese in this arrangement. They are, above all people, addicted to symmetrising their arrangements. For the work of creation they have five processes. Amongst the celestial bodies they have five planets. In the creation of the world they have five elements, and they have in the

* The reporter's notes of this speech were twice carefully revised by Sir Thomas Wade, before his lamented decease.—ED.

moral system five virtues, and between all these categories, moral and material, they discover a scientific relationship. The five virtues as a rule can, none of them, be translated by a single word. The first (in the order in which they usually state them) we are in the habit of Englishing by the word *humanity*; but it is a great deal more; it is philanthropy, benevolence, by which I mean disinterestedness, and in many cases it may be translated by *charity*; I mean Christian charity, not mere almsgiving. The second is that which may be translated by justice or principle, or very often by *public spirit*. The third, which we very commonly translate as *decorum* or *propriety*, is a far more comprehensive term, and should be translated by *obligations* and *observances*: it includes all ritualistic ceremonies, and all the courtesies that pass between one individual and another; but it may as correctly be described as a religious character. The fourth is *knowledge* or *experience*: it involves what Confucius was never tired of inculcating, viz.: studiousness. The fifth is *good faith*: good faith in sincerity of heart and good faith in practice.

It is worth noting that the word *sin* (good faith) has the double meaning which *fides* has in Latin—*i.e.*, it is the good faith which is one of our qualities, and it is belief, or the power of believing; indeed, the Chinese have no more common word for the word *belief* than that which we translate also as *good faith*.

I come next to the treatment of children by their parents. There is a certain severity, it is true, insisted upon on the part of the father; but it should be borne in mind, that in one of the earliest books put into a child's hand, he is taught that not to teach him is the fault of the father, but that to teach him without severity is simple laziness on the part of the teacher.

On page forty-six, in referring to the heterodox religions forbidden, the Roman Catholic form of Christianity, the Western doctrine, is mentioned as that "which exalts the Master of Heaven," and in parenthesis, the word *sky* is mentioned. In that particular combination, I should say *sky* had nothing to do with the question. I see below it is translated "Superior Heavens." The word *Heaven* when not used in a material sense is simply synonymous with our word *Providence*. The Chinese have no popular divinity

in the sense in which we understand the word, no single divinity to which the nation turns as the deity it worships. There is one Supreme Ruler, to whom the monarchs of old sacrificed, and to whom the present monarchs sacrifice. I suppose there is no worship on earth to which we can assign a continuous existence of 3,000 years, except this worship of the emperors, and some learned men go the length of believing, with Professor Legge of Oxford, that the *supreme ruler* of China is none other than the God of Revelation. I think it is very presumable that the divinity still sacrificed to by the Emperor of China did once represent the true God, early known, and long since lost; but I do not gather from Chinese literature that we have the right to say that the Supreme Ruler of China is beyond dispute the God of Revelation. Be this as it may, the individuality of this divinity was very early merged in an undefined godhood. In the Canon of History, an ancient work from which we learn what we know of the ancient constitution of what was not yet by a good deal the Chinese Empire, but merely a central state attaching to itself barbarous nations around and gradually civilizing them, I think we see clearly that the word Heaven began very early to be interchanged with the word Supreme Ruler. In fact, in regard to the obligations of men, high and low, you meet with the word *Heaven* very much more often than you do with the Chinese term *Shang Ti* (Supreme Ruler). But as regards the translation in the paper as *sky*, I do not think that is sustainable. The Roman Catholics had considerable difficulty in finding a term to render the word *God*, and they finally settled on *The Lord of Heaven*. Therefore we may be quite sure in that combination *The Lord of Heaven* was not intended to mean the sky that you see. There is, it is true, in Chinese philosophy, a great modern philosopher who has made Confucius his own, or has almost substituted himself for Confucius, and it is manifest in one passage of his writings that he is seeking to disentangle for himself the material from the immaterial. Still the ordinary Chinese when speaking, not of the sky but of the deity, use *Heaven* in the sense we use it in such phrases as "Heaven's will be done"; that is as immaterial. The Jesuits appear to have accepted that view, and allowed them to continue their homage

towards their deity. In their discussions with other missionaries they in fact contended that what the Chinese worshipped was the immaterial Heaven. The result was an angry controversy, and the difference between the Jesuits and their contemporaries on this point contributed mainly to the expulsion of both, and over two centuries ago.

There is in the paper a reference to the human frame which I think requires a little observation. The respect of the Chinese for the body and the distinctions that they draw in their punishments between punishment which mutilates the body and that which does not mutilate the body, is referable to considerations which we could not be prepared for. It is referable to the relation of the son to the father. The mutilation of the body, the loss of an arm, to say nothing of the loss of the head, is considered a reflection on the parents, in that it is a mutilation of the body bestowed upon the child by the parent. Therefore the criminality of a bad act, which involves death by mutilation of the person, is aggravated by the very fact that the body will have to be mutilated in the punishment of it.

And so we draw on to the question of ancestral worship and burial. I think one might say, before we come to ancestral worship, that the Chinese have regarded the practice of burial of the dead, from very early times, as a distinct mark of civilization. In the recorded utterances of the philosopher Mencius, the greatest of the representatives of the Confucian doctrine, who preached two generations after him, the fact that certain savage people had no knowledge of sepulture, is mentioned as strong evidence of their barbarism; and it being, in the minds of the Chinese, so sacred a rite, it is not to be wondered that the people who had put before them the duty of the child to the parent, should pay particular attention to the rite of sepulture and to the graves in which their forefathers are buried. I have never been able to regard the Worship of Ancestors as a rite to be summarily put down. I do not regard it as an idolatrous rite. The tombs are repaired twice a year; in the spring and autumn. A tablet, it is true, is exhibited with a number of characters on it; but there is no image and no image worship. There are offerings set

by the dead and incense burned, but I do not think the origin of that worship is to be explained otherwise than by the prescription which Confucius himself obeyed and inculcated, namely, that you shall serve the parent, dead, as though he were yet living; that is, you shall reverentially regard him; and I think that by our missionaries there should be very tender treatment indeed of the question of Ancestral Worship. If there is anything approaching an infraction of the 1st or 2nd Commandment in it (which I do not, myself, see that there is) we may be certain of this, that as the Chinese get nearer the God of Revelation they will put away such things as being unimportant. In our own case think of the number of occasions (and the usage has increased in the last generation), on which we repeat the obsequies of the dead when we have funeral commemoration services for them. For what purpose? Certainly not from a feeling of anything like idolatrous adoration of the departed, but in token of the continuance, it may be of the affection, or it may be of the respect we feel for them, or, is it not also, of the reliance on the Power into Whose hands the spirit has more immediately passed. I do not think it is worth while, therefore, for missionaries to attack, headlong, that question of Ancestral Worship. I think we must extend to it very much the same tolerance that St. Paul enjoined upon early Christians in the case of the Jews in respect of the ceremonies which they had been brought up to observe and which they were, for the time, unwilling to put away.

To pass to "Benevolent Institutions," although Confucianism inculcates benevolence, I think that in the *practice* of benevolence a vast deal is due to Buddhism. Buddhism inculcates philanthropy. We must be on our guard, however, against the assumption that the *practice* which we designate philanthropy, whether on the part of the government or of private persons, be wholly disinterested. You will frequently see in Peking, people who are not remarkably well-to-do, going about with cumbrous copper cash in their girdles to give to beggars, or to the helpless as they meet them. We must admit that their action does not all spring from the loftiest motives. They do believe that for their goodness and charity in this way they will be rewarded both here and hereafter,

that is, those who believe in a hereafter. Their charity is no little of it, a loan to fortune. And as regards the action of the government, I think there is a good deal of political motive in it. When the government comes to the rescue in famine, for instance, a strong motive, without doubt, is that without keeping the people quiet they are in danger of most serious consequences. It would not be fair, at the same time, to either Confucianism or Buddhism to affirm that neither the official nor the private citizen is at all moved by the teaching of these systems to be charitable.

I am afraid that, perhaps, I am encroaching on your time, but there is a great deal of ground to travel over.

To come to the laws of China, the codification of these is stated to have begun about B.C. 1100. Certainly the laws of the Chou Dynasty, which was founded about that date, are the oldest Chinese laws we possess; but we should never approach any part of Chinese ancient literature without remembering that the burning of the books two centuries before Christ by the decree of the despot who, having extinguished all his rival vassals, created himself the first emperor of all China, has put in doubt the authenticity of many of the extant texts. The dynasty of this man lasted so short a time, not more than twenty years, and the territory he had already assumed command of, was so extensive, that I should doubt that all the literature he intended to destroy had been destroyed. Still, he certainly went to work very ruthlessly, and to his command that all the books except two or three should be so disposed of, some effect was given. His dynasty was no sooner at an end than there was a reaction, and a number of books were, according to tradition, recovered. At all events within half a century of his disappearance, China had re-established her claim to possess a literature, and it is on that literature that her people have been fed ever since. Though it is manifest when parts of these ancient books are compared with each other that they cannot all be accepted as authentic, I see no reason to doubt that books very much such as those believed to have existed before and after the time of Confucius (B.C. 550-470), did exist, and that they were very much the same as those we have now. Thus the *Ritual of Chou* or some book of the sort was, I can have little doubt, the

foundation of the law that has prevailed in China ever since, from the burning of the books to the present time.

As regards the non-existence of a public ministry, a grand central department, in connection with state tribunals, there is this to be said, that in China every magisterial tribunal is competent to the administration of almost every law. The country is governed by a vast hierarchy or great bureaucratic system, the centre of which is of course Peking. Beyond the frontiers of China Proper we find what we may describe as military governments, of which we have not now time to say more. China Proper itself is divided into eighteen provinces. The higher officers of these we denominate Governors, Commissioners of Finance, of Justice, and Intendants of Circuits. Within the province are subdivisions, the larger of which we call departments, while the lesser subordinate to these are styled districts. This is roughly the provincial administration. The magistrate of the district is judge of first instance, as the French would call him. There are nearly 1,500 of these districts that the Empire is cut into, and every complaint, be it civil or criminal, before it can be tried elsewhere has first to go before this Magistrate, who is Coroner and Collector of Revenue, Registrar of Land Tenure, and, in short, the common centre of duties that, in western countries, we should suppose it would require ten or twenty departments to discharge. A petitioner must appear in that officer's court before he goes to the Prefect to complain, and that officer's decision, except in very minor cases, must be referred to the Prefect. Cases of certain gravity the Prefect sends up to the Criminal Commissioner, and eventually up to the Governor of the Province. Any very grave case is referred by the Governor of the Province to the different departments at Peking. You may say that the Empire is over-spread with a net-work of tribunals for the administration of the law, all of them dependent with more or less directness upon the Central Government.

I see it is stated that in some instances the audience, the persons assembled in court, are consulted. I confess I never heard of such a proceeding as that. It is the farthest thing from probable that a mandarin would do more than, perhaps, dramatically appeal to his audience; but the people are not

allowed any voice in the decision; for if the officer were wrong, he would stand in a very awkward position with his superiors, the high authorities of the province, whose place it is to review his decision, and if it be incorrect, to denounce him to the bureaus in the capital.

As to the division of punishments into two, *i.e.*, the death punishment being divided into decapitation and strangulation, they are again sub-divided; but decapitation or strangulation may take place after an appeal to the Emperor, which would give a prisoner a respite up to the following autumn assize, as it is called, or later. Then there is death by slow degrees, or flaying alive. That is a punishment commonly inflicted on rebels or for very grave offences, parricide for instance. I would here refer to the paucity of these punishments, which I think the Author remarked on towards the end of his paper. It is very true, on the whole, that punishments are not extraordinarily frequent, and indeed it is my impression though the Chinese, like civilized nations, commit every crime in the calendar, yet on the whole, if you consider how inferior their civilization is, how supine the government is, I believe there is not an extraordinary amount of crime in the country, as compared with what I have heard and read of in India. I have never done more than set my foot there, from time to time, but I should say that in India crime appears to me a great deal more frequent than in China. At the same time when dealing with such crimes as rebellion or piracy, the government is not sparing of severity. In the great T'ai P'ing rebellion, Canton was besieged by a certain section of these T'ai P'ing rebels for four months, and all the heads of the provincial government were beleaguered in the city without being able to stir out of it. The force at last broke up for want of funds. They had in their ranks very few of what we should call the responsible class in China, and certainly none, I should say, of the well-to-do people, but having broken up for want of funds, the government immediately reasserted itself. Rebels were brought in by the thousand to be dealt with in the city, and it was computed, and I fully believe it, that in the few months during which the Governor-General Yeh charged himself with the complete suppression of that rebellion, he beheaded 72,000 people.

The tortures which are alluded to in China and mentioned in our newspaper reports are sometimes such that we should hesitate to pronounce tortures; there is flogging and brutal usage, no doubt. But there are tortures administered by the law for the purpose of extracting confessions, to which we should give no other name; punishments the infliction of which we should not knowingly tolerate an hour in any country over which we exercise jurisdiction. There is, for instance, the use of a kind of boot, among other tortures, where three pieces of wood are brought to bear on the two feet and ankles. This is a punishment that was sanctioned by the third emperor of this dynasty, himself a very great lawyer, a public servant, who took immense pains with his work, but who was a cowardly man and with a very great tendency to severity. But even he, when these systems were submitted to him, observed, in his decree giving sanction to their adoption, that they should be resorted to with great caution, for though they might be useful in getting out the truth, yet if they were applied too harshly, there was no falsehood that might not be extorted by them.

I see that hundreds of millions are credited with the ability to read and write sufficiently for the ordinary purposes of life. I should flinch from giving quite so large an estimate as that, but the proportion of these millions is enormous. I should say, too, instead of reducing the occupations of life to two categories, viz. :—those connected with the mandarin class and those relating to trade, we should divide them into four, that being the Chinese partition. The Chinese divide the whole population into scholars, agriculturists, handicraftsmen, and merchants. Trade is put last and you must notice that agriculture is put second. Not only in ancient times did the Emperors plough in public and the Empresses weave silk, but to this time, once a year, the Emperor ploughs a limited piece of ground in the temple of the Spirit of Agriculture, while the Empress also spins or weaves, to show the respect of the dynasty for these ancient pursuits.

I think I must hasten to the end. There is a belief expressed in the Paper that “the gradual introduction of literature, which tends to explain the science and leading features of social life in

other countries, must of necessity affect the train of thought by which during some thousands of years past the ruling classes and the people in general have been educated." We must remember that this introduction of new ideas can only be regarded as only just beginning, in such a length of life as China has enjoyed. It was not before we became established at Peking in 1860 that, by the treaty which Lord Elgin signed in 1858, foreigners obtained access to the interior of the country, and up to a late date there was, and is indeed still, great opposition to the introduction of fresh knowledge at all. The passage that the Author read out to us would explain why there should be such an opposition. Boldly stated, the objection (putting aside the common dislike which many of us feel to changing our old ways), is in large part suggested by the precept of Confucius, that strange ways must be wrong. He particularly desires his followers to avoid new doctrines and new principles; to avoid fresh ways; and one subsidiary reason for the prescription that is given by him and by others up to this hour, is that not only may a new principle be directly wrong, but that new ways, particularly inventions, such as those that to our thinking have become so necessary to mankind in the present day, steamers and railways and such like, while they do violence to the theoretic simplicity approved by the ancient sages, promote also a desire for the accumulation of wealth, which according to the same teachers, must be harmful.

As to the last words of the Author, I heartily agree with him that the danger besetting the progress of China is immense. We should differ somewhat perhaps as to the means of protection at her disposal. She is in contact with more than the three powers mentioned—Russia, France, and England—all possibly dangerous by reason of their jealousies and conflicting interests. She is also in contact with Germany and the United States, and the Author suggests that the United States and England would be found her most valuable allies. If China does not move with greater rapidity (she is moving a little) she will certainly not prove equal of *herself* to face the consequences of any collision into which her disregard of treaty obligations to any treaty power may bring her. Meanwhile she is much too prone to disregard

her obligations to all. But in the event of such a collision as circumstances may bring upon her, we cannot invite her to rely on the active intervention either of the United States of America or ourselves; certainly, least of all of ourselves. Supposing that the Empire were involved to-morrow in a quarrel with France or Russia, or any other power in which we thought China was decidedly in the right, should we venture to say to any British subject or agent, whether in China or elsewhere, "You may go and help the Chinese if you like"? It is positively the last thing we should do. We have had officers in their land and sea services in times of peace, assisting them to construct men-of-war and to take other steps to enable them to preserve their independence, but in the event of a war we should at once have to withdraw such assistants; and the Chinese know that. With the United States I believe the difficulty would be almost as great. The Chinese would rather, I incline to believe, have English assistance than any other, but they must be aware by this time that they cannot always get it when it may be wanted. The power on which they might more reasonably rely is, in my opinion, Germany; because Germany would not be hampered at all by the same kind of restrictions that we should be; but, then again, Germany, at the very moment she was asked to assist, might have her own difficulty with China, going on as she is going on, and in that case support of her own interests might force upon Germany an unfriendly attitude. My one hope for China lies in a prolongation of peace until she shall have had something more, a good deal more, of the education that she needs, if she is to continue an independent state. I do not think that she will rapidly become aggressive; that is, I do not think this so probable as some people say it is. For years to come, at all events, she will be simply, with the aid of foreign intelligence, preparing herself to preserve her independence; the means to that end no doubt being the adoption of much that Confucius protested against centuries ago, the ultimate outcome of which, again, will be the substitution of some other moral and political system for that which we are wont to style Confucianist. The result of such a change it would be premature to predict.

The AUTHOR.—I desire, in the first place to express my gratification and thanks for your very kind reception of my paper.

If it had no other aim than to call forth the most valuable remarks of Sir Thomas Wade, I think more than the object I originally had in view would have been attained. His remarks are most valuable and of course I accept the comments that he has so kindly been pleased to make with regard to my paper. If I should live sufficiently long to have the honour of reading another before this Institute, I should endeavour to profit by those comments; but, in the meantime I would, with all deference, suggest whether we may not submit a request to Sir Thomas Wade to formally present at a meeting of this Institute, a continuation and expansion of the remarks he has made. (Applause.) I am sure it would be much valued from one possessing such an extensive knowledge of China, and having such experience, to say nothing of the exalted reputation he has always enjoyed in that country. Though I have not had the honour of his personal acquaintance, still, ever since I was associated with China myself, that is since the year 1860, I have heard his name constantly, and it has always been mentioned in terms of the very highest respect and admiration.

I will add no more than to repeat the hope I have already expressed.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sure the wish that has been expressed by the author of the paper is one that will be echoed by all the Council. As to the worship of ancestors, I think there are those at home who should not say too much about the Chinese, for in some places the extensive floral and other ornamentation of graves, with different articles, that are put on them, seems to find its counterpart in what the Chinese do. May I ask you to join with me in thanking Dr. Gordon for his very valuable paper and also Sir Thomas Wade for his most valuable remarks.

Sir THOMAS WADE.—I should very much like to say that so far as what I might call the archaic divisions of the paper, to which we have listened with such gratification, are concerned, that any one who really desires to get views of "Confucianism," as it was and as it is, could not do better, in my opinion, than examine that not

very large work published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

As regards the modern characteristics of the Chinese; really there is such an immense amount of detail that at once presents itself whenever one takes up the pen to write upon it, that I have always shrunk from the task.

Before sitting down I may say that you have done me the honour, more than once, of asking me to produce something on this topic; but I find myself so much better at promising than performing, that I will abstain, at any rate for the present, from making any promise on the subject.

The meeting was then adjourned.

REMARKS ON THE FOREGOING PAPER.

The Ven. Archdeacon A. E. MOULE, B.D., remarks:—

“The statements about ‘Ancestral Worship’ in China are I think open to criticism. The author is, I believe, right as to the original *sentiment* which gave birth to ancestor worship; but not right in implying, as he seems to imply, that modern observances coincide with ancient sentiment. Modern observances *do* I fear, involve *worship*. I have discussed this subject at some length in my recent book *New China and Old*, and have pleaded the desirability of substituting some Christian memorial rite for the Chinese church, which may preserve the sentiment and avoid superstitious observance.—I do not venture to offer a definite estimate of the number of readers and writers in China, but it is only a percentage of the male population.”

Mr. T. A. BARBER, M.A., Caius College, Cambridge, late of Wuchang High School, writes:—

Dr. Gordon’s paper is a straightforward statement of facts and quotations, comment and explanation being, as a whole, excluded

by limits of space. Eight years in a purely Chinese city have given me some little knowledge of the matters brought forward. On one or two points it may be wise to utter a caution: the writer has ventured on the statement that almost every man can read and write sufficiently for the ordinary purposes of life; my experience is that the fact is far short of the statement. The ideographic nature of the written language must be remembered; half a dozen years of a boy's life are spent in mere unreasoning rote-work, in learning the particular sound attached to a particular character. Thus the great mass of the working class leave school at thirteen or fourteen, just before the "meaning" stage of education is reached, with the result that there are huge numbers who "know characters," but who can scarcely be said to read in our sense of an associated intelligence in reading. Even below this meagre standard of scholarship in the cities there are many who cannot read a character, and in most country districts of which I have knowledge, certainly at a generous estimate not more than half the working classes can read at all. Rough and ready proof of this is found in the fact that Christian converts, who are mostly drawn from the lower classes, constantly bear witness to the entrance of new ideas by "*learning to read.*"

The subject of *Ancestral Worship* is so large and so difficult that it may be questioned whether it is worth while to write one paragraph in comment on one paragraph dealing with so vast a matter. Undoubtedly here is the *Arcanum* of the Chinese religious sentiment. Undoubtedly there is much to admire in this prime religious observance which tallies so well with the basal principle in Chinese ethics—filial piety. It is only fair to recognise the kinship to western care for the memorials of the dead; but it should not be forgotten that in practical life the outcome is the slavery of the living to the dead, and a childish perpetual haunting fear of ghosts. Dr. Gordon speaks of the offering of prayers at the graves; it should be clearly stated that while Buddhist and Taoist priests are often paid to chant masses for the repose of the departed, prayers to the dead are frequent. The belief is that the comfort of the dead depends on the amount spent by the living on paper money, houses, etc., which when burnt turn to the real article in Hades, and consequently that the spirits in Hades will return to plague and spoil the luck of those unable and unwilling to comply with these mercantile necessities.

Reverence, holy memory, affectionate dwelling on the precepts of the departed—these are the good side; but fear is practically the basis of morality rather than love, the bliss of the future life is reduced to a ledger account which perpetuates the inequalities of the present, and there is a strong tendency to the degradation of the practice of this fundamental morality down to a game of hide and seek with exacting and vengeful ghosts. The question suggested by the writer as to the effect upon nineteenth century international relations of the command in the sacred Edict “Cast out foreign sects,” is a very practical one in China. That Edict is by law read publicly by high officials every month throughout the land.

Rev. R. C. FORSYTH writes :—

With respect to Ancestral Worship; as a Christian missionary who has laboured in the interior of China for over eight years, I cannot agree that this ceremony is harmless.

Dr. Williams in his *Middle Kingdom*, vol. ii, page 239, says, “The fact that filial piety in this system has overpassed the limit set by God in His word and that deceased parents are worshipped as gods by their children, is both true and sad. That the worship rendered to their ancestors by the Chinese is idolatrous cannot be doubted; and it forms one of the subtlest phases of idolatry—essentially evil with the guise of goodness—ever established among men.”

With this conclusion, I in common with the great majority of missionaries in China must reluctantly concur. In our mission—the English Baptist—working in Shantung, we have endeavoured to substitute for the idolatrous worship a Christian service of thanksgiving and praise with, however, not very marked results.

Laws and enactments.—In China, so far as I know it, the administration of the law is notoriously corrupt,* and in the district where our mission is working, robbery with violence and other forms of lawlessness are common, during the winter months especially.

* The wise laws and edicts of generations gone by seem to exist, but not to be enforced.

Litigation is unfortunately very common and carried with surprising virulence to ruinous extremes ; but justice is rare and the administration of it difficult where bribery is the rule and lying so universal.

As to "China in the future," there is no reasonable doubt that a great future is yet in store for China. Her thousands are spreading themselves all over the globe and no doubt millions will follow whenever the opportunity occurs. The Government of China is corrupt and the people are suffering in many ways from its laxity and inefficiency, but with the spread of Christianity which of later years has made remarkable progress, and with her sons in many lands receiving Christianity and witnessing its benefits, we may hope that China will at no distant date take her proper place at the head of Asia and at the feet of Christ.