

Pitiful Lives of Chinawomen.

It is a mistake to speak of the Chinese as mere barbarians. The progress of the world's scientific knowledge has not been kept pace with by their scholars, and their moral ideas, especially in regard to kindness and humanity are behind those of the Christian nations; but they are a most learned people in their ancient, mostly useless, ways, and they have made many discoveries in the past, and are highly skilled artistically. We need only remember, to help us to realize this, that the favorite beverage of the world—tea—was discovered by Chinese gardeners; that the silks that are still the best and most splendid of dress materials were first spun and woven by them; and that the "china" that is so pleasant and cleanly to eat off, and that has replaced the pewter and coarse earthenware plates and jugs of our own forefathers, was, originally, produced amongst the Chinese.

Since it is universally agreed by thinkers on social science that the position of women is at once a test of the standing in civilization of a nation, and a reason for its further progress, the very low position given to the Chinese women may be a cause as well as a token, of the inferior place amongst the nations that China now holds. In this respect the leading men of China have for a few years past been slowly awakening to the need for change.

The small feet of the women are the great indication of this being the truth. For countless centuries the feet of the little girls have been tied up in bandages, to keep them always as small as those of natural children at five or six years of age. This has been a barrier to the growth of the intelligence of the women as well as to their influence. It is designed to prevent them from moving about freely; and as the spread of thought and knowledge can only be made by communication from mind to mind, the enforced confinement of the small-footed women, joined to their not being able to read, has mainly kept them narrow-minded and ignorant. All the missionary ladies state that the Chinese women cannot think. Miss Miller, missionary at Amoy, says: "Generally they will listen for a short time, but it is not easy to make them understand, they are so dense. If the foreign lady wishes to speak she can, but if we question them as to the meaning of what we have said, they reply: 'I am unable to understand,' and laugh at the idea of its being supposed that women can understand."

But this does not exactly show that the women of China are naturally unable to learn. The subordination of the women to the men is so absolute that the small feet are a result of it, and the natural consequence of both causes is the stupidity. The Chinese Government made an official appointment of Pung Kwang Yu to give a discourse on Confucianism to the Chicago World's Fair Congress in 1893, on religion. The mandarin referred considerably to the views taken of the women in China under that religion, which is the State and the leading faith, though "Buddhism" and "Taoism" are also forms of religion followed by many Chinese. Confucianism, on which the laws and customs are based, teaches that the wife is to regard her husband in just the same light as man is to regard God. Women are not to be allowed to learn anything except from the male head of their own family, and only what he pleases; and the mandarin stated that the main cause for the native dislike of the missionaries is that they try to teach the women to believe in Christianity apart from, and independent of, their husbands. "In China," he said, "the responsibility of educating the women rests with the head of each family; the primary object is to preserve female modesty. If such a practice as giving religious instruction directly to women and girls is allowed it will have the effect of driving away from the Christians all those who value filial piety, truth, probity, rectitude, and sincerity, or who have any sense of shame!"

To make Christian hearers understand the impossibility of Chinese women having any independent thoughts or actions, Pung Kwang further informed them that "Chinese law provides that in the case of a female person violating the law the punishment for it is inflicted upon the male head of the family. Chinese law provides that a woman burning incense to ancestors publicly, a sacrilege for a woman, shall be punished with stripes,

but the actual person beaten shall be the male head of her house; and this principle is applicable to all violations of law in which the offender is a female person!"

"At first sight this may seem like a 'woman's privilege,' but like many other similar special provisions for women, it is in practice the cause of incredible misery to the 'protected' females. The foot-binding is a device hardly unreasonable if the man must pay the penalty of his wife's or daughter's crimes, to prevent the women going about, acting, and conversing, and so learning to think, on their own account; and there has hardly been in the history of the world a practice that has caused so much agony, so protracted and so acute, as the foot-binding of China. Most of us know the misery of an occasional tight boot; think of the poor little girls whose feet, night and day without rest, are deliberately bound up so tightly that they shall not grow!"

Mrs. Archibald Little, who has founded a Chinese society against foot-binding, to which a good many leading Chinamen have given in their names, tells us that it is quite a frequent thing for the crushed toes to mortify and fall off; and that the pain is always so insupportable that the tiny children are given opium as the only means of enabling them to sleep. Even then the unhappy little things cry aloud in the night, so that a Chinese mother sleeps with a big stick beside her in order to get up and beat the little one into silence. We remember our mothers as the beings to whom we owed our most tender soothing and most ready sympathy; Chinese women remember theirs chiefly as torturers who first inflicted unspeakable agony and then had recourse to violent beating to silence the wails of ceaseless pain.

It is not, as some English people think, only the rich women who are foot-bound. On the contrary, Miss Williams, missionary, of Kalgan, testifies that "the women and girls who work in the fields all day have smaller feet than the middle-class women have;" and Mrs. Little gives a sad picture of the women that she sees kneeling to do all sorts of heavy field-work, because if they try to stand their tiny feet sink into the land. No wonder that we are told, "One thing they are all conscious of, and that is that their burdens are greater than they can bear, and that life is full of sorrow." Infanticide of female children is common, so much so that some twenty years ago a proclamation of a native Viceroy stated that not more than 20 to 30 per cent. of the girls born were permitted to live; "wherefore," he continued "you are now required to acquaint yourselves that all male and female infants being equally your flesh and blood, you may be visited by Heaven with some monstrous calamity if you rear only the male and drown the female children." The retribution that he threatened, however, was that "repeated female births follow in many cases when the female infants have been drowned!"

A Chinese father does not count his girls as children; he will say that he has no children when half-a-dozen female offspring are running about his home. A husband may divorce his wife merely at his caprice and for no cause; but in no case of even the worst outrages, can a wife so free herself from a bad husband. Girls are sold as slaves, under the pretended name of "adoption" by their purchasers. The marriage of a widow is considered disreputable. The married women work very hard, and have to pay their husbands for their keep, as well as to find the men in clothing and other things. Marriage portions are always demanded in classes above the very lowest, and a girl who has no money has little chance of honorable marriage, but will have to be taken as an "inferior wife" in a polygamous fashion.

Yet while the women are thus degraded, the natural affection of a man of good feelings for his wife, and the influence of personal character in some woman, results in a different state of affairs practically. A missionary says:—

"The true state of affairs in many households is well illustrated by the present position of the Emperor and Dowager Empress. In nearly all Chinese families the ruling power is really in the hands of some women, whose decisions with regard to domestic matters at any rate are final." And another says that it is useless to convert the men alone, as in that case idol worship will continue in the house just the same; and it is no good to ask the converted husband why he does not put a stop to it. All the writers are agreed as to the intense poverty of the majority of the Chinese. "Many of these women never know what it is to have a full,

satisfying meal from one year's end to another."

Other features that help to modify the sad position of Chinese women are the natural love of a father for his child, even if it be a despised girl; and the great respect paid by all Chinese to their ancestors, in which the female parent has some share. A lady doctor in China gives an interesting account of the care that Chinese sons sometimes bestow on afflicted mothers. In one case an old lady was operated on by the doctor for cataract in the eye. She was dreadfully afraid of the operation, and her sons actually carried her to the hospital and back home again three times before she finally went through it. Then, for three weeks, during which her eye was still under treatment, they never both left her at once, one of them staying in the darkened room in attendance on her incessantly.

THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM.

Neutral Nations May Harbour Fugitive Rulers.

Portugal's right to grant an asylum at Lourenço Marquez has been called in question by the European newspapers, and in particular by the English press. That Portugal possesses this right is indisputable. But it is subject to one important qualification. It is the duty of the power which offers asylum to a fugitive ruler to see that its territory is not utilized as a basis for fresh acts of belligerence on the part of its guests, and were, for instance, Mr. Kruger to issue from Lourenço Marquez proclamations urging the Boers to keep on fighting, England would have valid grounds for demanding the immediate expulsion of Ex-President Kruger or else of his surrender.

Cases of rulers of defeated states seeking asylum on the territory of neutral powers are relatively rare in modern times, the most recent instance having been that of the Arab Prince, who seized the throne of Zanzibar on the death of the late Sultan in the absence of the lawful heir, and who when called upon by the British suzerain power, to withdraw, deliberately defied the English and trained the guns with which the palace was armed upon the British war-ships in harbor. A few hours' engagement resulted in the defeat and flight of the usurper, who, when he found himself hard pressed by the English landing force, sought refuge at the German consulate general's, from whence he was conveyed on board a German man-of-war's boat, to one of Emperor William's cruisers. There he found refuge and hospitality. England did not even demand his surrender, acknowledging the right of Germany to offer him asylum, and it was only a year or two afterward, when, having established himself on the mainland in the German-East African colony, England made quiet representations at Berlin against the Prince being allowed to use German territory as a basis of intrigues against the present Sultan.

Emperor Napoleon III. was too cleverly trapped by the Germans at Sedan to enable him to carry out his project of seeking an asylum on Belgian soil, which he subsequently traversed as a prisoner of war on parole on his way to the palace of Wilhelmshöhe, which had been assigned to him by Emperor William as a residence during the remainder of the war.

Ex-President Kruger is now on his way to Holland, where he expects to make his home. The English Government will no more dream of offering any objection to his being received there with honor and hospitality than was made by France when England received with analogous distinction and tokens of regard France's various exiled rulers and pretenders, or by Prussia when Austria gave a chivalrous welcome and a most generous reception to the defeated and exiled King of Hanover, to the fugitive Elector of Hesse Cassell, and to the dispossessed Duke of Nassau.

ONE WHEAT GRAIN.

Did you ever stop to think of the responsibilities of a grain of wheat? We are so used to seeing the field sown with wheat and the crop come up and ripen that we quite forget how each little grain does a great work through the summer days in multiplying and adding to the farmer's harvest. A farmer once planted one grain of white Australian wheat, and at harvest time from it had sprung 1,360 grains of large, fat wheat. He planted 10 acres of this wheat and harvested 177 sacks, each weighing 138 pounds. The single grain spoken of produced 36 stalks, so you see even a grain of wheat helps wonderfully.

YOUNG FOLKS.

THE HAPPY SEA GULL.

In madcap glee I whirl and fly
Where storm winds rip and rave,
I drift and circle in the sky
And skim the purple wave.
As happy as the day is long
Am I because my boast
Is like the burden of my song
I'll ne'er be served on toast.

I shimmer where the beach plums bloom,
Among the shells I bob,
And hear the billous billow boom
In symphony and sob.
And to its twilight lullaby
I flap along the coast,
And in my rosy rapture sigh:
I'll ne'er be served on toast.

I often flap my wings at fate
When all is bright or black,
And gliding down the sky elate
In triumph loud I shriek.
And oft when I outsoar the lark
And graze the sun almost,
I fondly to myself remark:
I'll ne'er be served on toast.

When on the brine I rise and sink
Or float the clouds above,
I'm lost in joy until I think
I'm Aphrodite's dove,
Because of time I'm not the slave
That knows the chain and post—
A wistful wail of wind and wave,
I'll ne'er be served on toast.

I am no caged ringed cockatoo,
That mopes from morn till night—
I cleave the shining ether through
The storm king's acolyte.
And such I'll be until this shell
So frail shall slip the ghost,
Which oft will whistle on the swell:
I'll ne'er be served on toast.

SHOES FOR DOGS.

In his interesting book, "The Apostle of the North," Egerton R. Young tells of the importance of carrying a large supply of shoes for the dogs when travelling by dog-train, with the thermometer from 50 to 60 degrees below zero.

Shoes for the dogs are essential, as a dog's foot is very liable to injury. Sometimes on the rough, sharp ice they cut their feet so that they bleed very much. At other times in the rough places they break off the nails from their toes or run sharp spikes through the webbing between their toes. When thus injured they are quite unfit for work, and speedily let it be known that something is wrong.

An experienced dog will stop and refuse to move until his sore feet are attended to. The wise missionary will have handy a bunch of cotton wool as well as dog shoes. A little of the wool, saturated with balsam, gum, is fastened over the wounded part of the foot, then the dog shoe, which is like a long mitten, without the thumb, is drawn on the foot and securely fastened with a piece of deerskin.

The dogs get to be very fond of these shoes, and sometimes resort to queer expedients to get them on. They will sometimes pretend to be very footsore; and if the night be especially cold at the camp, they will howl and whine for them in a way that is pathetic, though at times very laughable. Mr. Evans' famous train of half dogs, half wolves, would lie down on their backs, and, holding up their four feet, would howl for him or Henry, his native Indian helper, to put on their shoes. Other missionaries have had their dogs do the same thing.

ETIQUETTE AMONG CHINESE.

According to the laws of good society in China young widows should not remarry. Widowhood is therefore held in the highest esteem, and the older the widow, the more agreeable her position becomes. Should she reach 50 years, she may, by applying to the Emperor, get a sum of money with which to buy a tablet, on which her virtues are named, the tablet being placed over the door at the principal entrance to her house.

Contrary to the practice that prevails in other countries, the deference shown to women in Austria increases with age. No Austrian would ever dream of receiving a lady's extended hand without bowing to kiss it. Children, even when grown, always touch the hands of their parents with their lips before venturing to raise their faces for a kiss. Girls and young married women, no matter how lofty their station, do not consider it beneath their dignity to kiss the hands of ladies who have attained a certain age. Austria, indeed, is the paradise of old ladies. The men are also extremely courteous, not only to ladies, but to each other.

The Arabs show their friendliness when meeting by shaking hands six or eight times: Arabs of rank go beyond this and embrace each other several times. The social etiquette of the desert, or among the Arabs, is a factor in life to be considered seriously if one wishes to live among them without friction. Thus, no greater insult can be offered to an Arab than a friendly inquiry as to the welfare of his wife, to us a natural civility, but to him a gross impertinence, bitterly resented.

Sons will never sit at meal with

their fathers in the presence of a guest, but will wait upon both until the father, rising, allows them the opportunity of breaking bread with their visitor.

A Turk always stands in the presence of his mother, until invited to sit down, a compliment he pays to no one else.

The Moor pays great respect to his elders, and to see two elderly, or dignified Moors salute is a pretty sight. With measured pace, the eyes of each fixed on those of the other, they approach with a slight inclination, holding the right hands slightly advanced. They press their finger tips together and begin a volley of prescribed salutations, greetings and inquiries, hardly pausing to insert replies, and ejaculating frequently, "God be praised." Then each presses the finger tips which have been honored by contact with those of his friend against his lips and then upon his heart, as he raises his head and redoubles his salutations. The old custom of falling on one another's necks is still in vogue between friends long separated. Inferiors saluting superiors usually kiss the hand, shoulder, top of turban or feet, or the knee or stirrup of a horseman, according to the terms on which they approach. In the extremity of humility, the very feet of one's horse are embraced.

When a Moslem meets a European accompanied by a Moor, though the latter be the servant, he not infrequently ignores the presence of the foreigner, and offers the salutation to his co-religionist only, but if he passes a party of Moors, Jews or Christians, he exclaims, "Peace be on the people of I-s'l-a-m." The way to speed the parting guest is to exclaim, "God give thee peace." To those whose presence has never been desired, it is usual to exclaim in tones sufficiently explicit, "God protect thee." "Be welcome, at home and at ease," is the welcome. Courteous interrogatories fall thick and fast. "How art thou? Thy house?"—the nearest approach permitted to inquiry after a man's wife.

CLOWNS AND CIRCUS BOYS.

The average boy cannot help thinking that to travel with a circus must be the grandest life in the world, but to be the clown as well would be the very height of bliss. Even the children who travel with the show envy the clown and want to learn his business. With one of the big shows out this year is a "circus rider" only 8 years old. His father and mother are riders, and where the law allows it he takes part with them in their act. In spangled white he rides a white horse bareback, leaps through hoops, is hoisted to the shoulder of his father and is carried at a swift pace around the ring. This is all fun for him—but what he really wants is to be a clown.

All his spare time he can be found turning "flips" and handsprings and practicing on the parallel bars, for a clown, as everybody knows, must be more skillful at everything than everybody else. Then, too, when he does a clever acrobatic trick it comes as a surprise, and he gets twice as much applause as anybody else.

There are half a dozen or more children with every large circus, and they have small chance of getting an education, except in the winter time, and very few of them attend them. Nearly always, however, there is some man with the circus who is well educated and who cares enough for the children to teach them what he knows and school is kept on the empty benches in the big tent after the afternoon show. Nearly always the teacher is a clown, for, strange to say, these makers of fun really are often good-natured and good-hearted fellows, who are well educated as well. These volunteer teachers get nothing extra for their work as teachers, but they do not expect anything. The idea that they are helping these bright youngsters on in the world is pay enough.

THE SAGACIOUS RAT.

One day a well-fed and sagacious rat came across an object made of stout wires, whose sole occupation seemed to be to take care of a liberal piece of cheese. Having had several years' experience with men and their machinations, the rat looked the ground over with great care, and he was still engaged in this occupation when a mouse appeared and wanted to know what was up.

"Why, the fact is," replied the rat, "I have more cheese here than I can possibly eat at one meal, and as cheese quickly spoils in this climate I was waiting for someone to come along and accept a portion."

"You are very, very generous," said the mouse.

"Don't mention it. Just step inside and pass the cheese out, will you?"

The mouse no sooner nibbled at the bait than there was a crash, and he found himself trapped.

"Ah, that's the way it works, is it?" queried the rat. "I couldn't just make it out. Um! I see. Spring there somewhere. Very good idea."

"But I'm caught!" exclaimed the mouse, in great agitation.

"So I observe."

"And what's to be done?"

"Well, I leave that for you to decide. I let you in on the ground floor, and my responsibilities cease there. Fine day. Hope we shall have a large harvest."

There is a good moral to this anecdote. Think it out.