

CHINA THE ANCIENT.

THE CELESTIAL KINGDOM IN LEGEND, TRADITION AND HISTORY.

Identity of the Race Not Clear—Probably Sprang From the Babylonians, While Other Kingdoms Crumbled China Lived On.

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JUST where in the family of races the Chinese belong is an acknowledged ethnological puzzle. Ancient Scythia, Babylonia and Sennar, the present Sudan, have all been fixed upon as the original habitat of the people who call themselves "sons of Han." The very latest authority brings strong proof in support of a theory that the Celestials emigrated to the territory they now occupy from a region south of the Caspian sea more than 4,000 years ago. In religion, political and social institutions, knowledge of astronomy and medicine as well as in language the primitive Chinese showed a marked affinity with peoples who under different names have inhabited the region east and north of the Holy Land.

The number of the original emigrants cannot be determined, as the history of the period is involved in myth. But the migration of vast tribes of Asiatics to distant lands is not a circumstance to be scorned. Plague, famine and war have been the disturbing causes in these migrations. The first Chinese settlements known in contemporaneous annals were along and north of the Hoang-Ho, or Yellow river, and Sian-fu, in the province of Shansi, the earliest known capital.

In the records of China the origin of the race is traced to the gods. One of the first rulers is said to have designed written characters and the system of measuring time. His successor discovered the medicinal properties of herbs and taught the people agriculture. With an eye to business he also established public markets, and to him therefore the farmers of the empire are indebted for their status as being in the second rank of importance. The next ruler invented money and taught mechanical arts. Thus three great agencies of civilized development—brains and muscle and their joint offspring, skill, were established in China before the dawn of accepted history.

Accepted Chinese history begins with the reign of the Emperor Yao (2333-2258 B. C.). Confucius describes Yao as a ruler of godlike instinct who extended his realm in the north and, being intelligent and accomplished, by the power of example "led all men unto him."

In the reign of the second historical emperor, the successor of Yao, floods devastated the country along the Yellow river, a calamity marking an epoch in the life of the empire. Early travelers in China who were familiar with Jewish chronicles believed this flood contemporaneous with the great deluge. In comparatively recent times the Yellow river has shifted its bed and found an outlet hundreds of miles north of the original mouth, which was south of Kiao-chau.

Ancient China was not free from evils which cursed other nations and led to their downfall, for although there were great rulers like Yao, who founded dynasties and gave an impetus to civilization, cruelty, corruption and licentiousness invariably brought discredit upon the throne, and some man of destiny either by intrigue or force of arms seized the helm and brought the ship of state back to her right course, and so while Egypt and Babylon, Assyria and Chaldea, Greece and Rome had their periods of opulence and power and then passed into oblivion China survived without any marked changes of destiny.

Monarchs who aspired to world conquest let China alone, yet in the days of Xerxes, Alexander and Caesar she was rich and austere, receiving tribute from surrounding nations. In ancient records a variety of names came into use to designate China, among them Chin, Sin, Sinae, Sinaim, Zenia and Zennastan, lastly Serica, the land of silk, from Seres, meaning silk. In the time of the Caesars silk from China was brought to the cities of the Mediterranean by traders who got their supplies from caravans which journeyed from the south the whole length of the present empire to the settlements along the Yellow river. The eggs of silkworms were smuggled out of China and carried to Rome during the reign of Justinian.

Assimilation of other races with the Chinese in the Middle Kingdom is a feature of modern rather than ancient development. The aborigines of China, the Miaotzu, have never been civilized. According to tradition, the Mohammedans, who comprise the majority of the population of the province of Yunnan, began their settlement in the eighth century of this era. It is said that during a revolt in China the reigning emperor brought in 3,000 Turkish soldiers from Bagdad, and these formed the nucleus of the Mohammedan population by settling in Yunnan and taking Chinese wives.

The Mantcheos, who during the past 200 years have spread over northern China, have been absorbed into the native population. In the case of the Miaotzu the difference between them and the Chinese invaders has been ineradicable. They inhabit the wildest mountain districts and cling to primitive old world customs. Gradually they have been pushed back into southwestern China, but have not suffered at the

hands of the Chinese except when aggressive, like the American savages. As the ancient Chinese spread out over vast territory cut up by mountains and rivers petty kingdoms or feudal states were established. For long periods the country was rent with war and strife either between the petty kingdoms themselves or between single states and the empire. Sages writing of that time give a picture similar to that found in the Arthurian legends of Britain. Finally a strong man arose who proclaimed himself universal soverign. He was opposed by the literary classes, and with a bold hand he commanded the destruction of all literature excepting works of divination and medicine. Next he built roads and bridges to connect the different states into closer union. At this time the Tartars were threatening the empire on the north, and the emperor, Shih, constructed the famous wall, which remains as a monument to the so called Chin dynasty.

The Han dynasty, which succeeded the Chin, ruled for four centuries and well into the Christian era and gave to modern Chinese civilization its distinctive impetus. Literature was restored to its old place, science and art patronized, great enterprises set going and among other achievements the first suspension bridges in the world constructed.

What the Chinese development would have become but for the aggressions of the Tartars on the north can only be conjectured. The Nestorian Christians gained a foothold in China, and a monument still standing in the ancient Chinese capital of Sian-fu attests their cordial reception. The religion imported from India was at first discouraged, then tolerated. No effort was spared on the part of the rulers to restore ancient beliefs and traditions as interpreted by the great Confucius. "China for the Chinese" was the watchword then as it has been since, but in spite of all the Tartars broke through the wall of stone and modified the material progress of the Middle Kingdom without, however, upsetting Chinese philosophy and morals.

Peking became the capital city of China as late as the thirteenth century, when the Mongol conquerors set up their court there. Subsequently Hang-chau was the capital until the restoration of Chinese rule, when Nankin became the seat of government. Peking was again selected as the capital early in the fifteenth century. Next to Sian-fu, the ancient capital, Nankin is the most typical Chinese city. Before the coming of the Mongols the rulers made this a secondary capital. Being in central China, it was beyond the reach of influence from the northern invader.

Nankin, situated on the Grand canal between Peking and Canton, was a great commercial center. The cloth called "nankeen" was largely manufactured there. During the Taiping rebellion the finest portion of the city was destroyed. The principal street, lined with handsome buildings, was laid in ruins, and the vandals, finding that they were to be driven from the chosen city of the "Sun of Heaven," who was their leader, wrecked the magnificent porcelain tower which had beautified the chief plaza more than 400 years. The tower was of an octagonal form and comprised nine galleries or stories. A chime of 144 bells delicately suspended at the corner of the cornices and from the pinnacle sent forth music when played upon by the winds.

Unlike the people who derive civilization from Greece and Rome, the Chinese look backward in their own country for types to worship and for precepts. They know nothing of the wise



PORCELAIN TOWER, NANKIN. (Constructed 1413-32. Destroyed by the Taiping rebels, 1854.)

men who gave philosophy to the western world. In their own land they have heroes who were great warriors and teachers and rulers. The exemplars set before the young in China are of their own race and their own land, and the precepts to be followed spring from the soil. Hence the Chinese way of thinking and doing things is unique beyond all experience.

When the civilization of Mars comes to be opened up to the dwellers upon this mundane sphere, there will be some rich surprises. China has flourished for ages and ages a little, far away, all sufficient world by itself.

GEORGE L. KILMER.

AN UNPROFESSIONAL REMEDY.

The operation promised to be quite successful, viewed as an operation simply, and yet the great surgeon did not look entirely satisfied as he removed his operating garments and made ready to depart. The eyes of the nurse who had waited upon him gleamed with professional satisfaction as they regarded the work of the morning, but they grew troubled as they fell upon the patient. She bent over and laid her ear against the faintly beating heart.

"She is sinking, doctor," she said. The great specialist turned back from the door he was passing through and came up to the bedside. The young surgeon who had been assisting him and who had modestly stepped aside as the patient was brought into the operating room and prepared for the anesthetic which he was to administer became as pale as his operating apron. The patient, who had borne the operation and the journey from the operating table back to her own room admirably, looked up at them suddenly, with eyes still dim and unseeing with weakness and languor. Then she lapsed back into unconsciousness, and the great surgeon shook his head gravely.

"She must be stimulated quickly," he told the assistant, "and she must be reminded of the highest possible incentive to live which you can think of as soon as she becomes conscious. This collapse is rather remarkable, considering how well she bore the operation and that she is not of an extremely nervous temperament. Revive her and see that she wishes to live just as quickly as possible."

"She has no incentive to live," the nurse told the younger surgeon as the great man hastened off to the waiting appointment which he could defer no longer. "She told me this morning that she is all alone in the world; that she would be rather glad to die than otherwise, and she only consented to undergo the operation at all because she considers it the duty of every one to make all reasonable efforts to prolong life. She hinted at an unhappy love affair," she concluded as they worked over the patient together, "and said that when the accident which necessitated this operation happened she had hoped that it was all over with her, young as she is."

The young surgeon made no reply, and the nurse, fearing that he thought her forward or unprofessional, blushed scarlet as she bent over the patient. She was a pretty woman herself and still in her first youth, although neither so young nor so beautiful as the motionless girl on the bed. But the young surgeon had no eyes for the blush which his silence had called forth. His face was as pale as hers was rosy, and the hands which lifted the unconscious head of the patient so that the nurse might administer some brandy and water trembled. When the eyelids of the fainting woman began to flicker a little, he moved so that the eyes they shaded should fall upon no one but the nurse. Standing in this position, the patient saw him no more than she had done when he stood behind her at the head of the operating table holding the cone by means of which he was administering the ether. But the young surgeon could see her perfectly, and he scrutinized the delicate, bloodless face with a care and a degree of attention not entirely due to professional interest.

"What do you mean by fainting, Miss Stanley?" exclaimed the nurse in her cheeriest, most professional accents as the wide eyes opened fully. "Don't you know that very time you faint it weakens you a little and that you've got to grow stronger instead of weaker if you want to live?"

"I don't want to live, not really," whispered back the patient weakly. "I don't care whether I live or not. I suppose I've got to try to get better because it seems to be my duty, but I'm too tired to feel like trying hard. What have I got to live for?" she finished to herself, the faint voice trailing off into a scarcely audible murmur.

The young surgeon stepped out from behind the bed head and took firm hold of the little patient's hands. "Live for me, Margaret," he said intensely. "I was a fool to be jealous of you, to doubt your love and goodness even for a second. I haven't known a happy or a peaceful moment since we parted. I thought my heart would break when I learned that you had been run over and so nearly killed, and it almost stopped beating when you were carried in this morning. Forgive me, Margaret, and live for my sake. We'll prove how good and happy life can be together yet."

The nurse had slipped out of the room for a moment, and they were quite alone. He stooped and kissed her lips. The little patient was still too near to the mysterious realms of unconsciousness to be astonished at anything that happened, and she took the happiness the gods provided in such unexpected fashion quite simply. When the nurse returned, she was sleeping like a baby, one frail little hand clasped in that of the young surgeon, and when the great surgeon stopped at her bedside the next morning her eyes were already bright with the hope of returning health, if no more.

"What's this I hear about your fainting yesterday?" he cried in cheery professional reproof. "Don't you know that such unreasonable conduct retards your recovery, my dear young lady, and don't you want to get well quickly?"

"Indeed I do, doctor," came the little patient's instantaneous reply. "I've so much to live for!"

And the nurse, although she maintained a discreet professional impassivity of attitude and facial expression, found it difficult to repress a sympathetic smile. —Chicago Tribune.

PODD'S ERROR

Squire Coram's daughter Betty was the acknowledged belle of Bungtown. Excelsior Podd, the only son of Philletus Podd, editor of the Bungtown Banner, went wild after her, and his father rather encouraged him. He was sure he had made a conquest, especially when George Deering brought him a note written by Betty's fair hand.

It was in these words: "My Dear Friend Excelsior Podd—I believe that you love me. Come tonight at 11 o'clock. The dog is chained, and there is no one to fear but father, and I am sure that you are smart enough to keep out of his way. Do not fail, and I am yours ever, Betty."

Excelsior was in ecstasies. He proceeded to her home. After passing through a grove he reached the fence which he was to cross. It was a high picket fence and not easy to climb, but Excelsior went over it like a bird. On the inside he saw a short steepladder and had forethought enough to place it against the fence to assist his ladylove in her flight.

Then he began his progress toward the house. When he was half way across the lawn, he was startled by the deep voiced barking of Squire Coram's bulldog, but he recovered his courage when he remembered Betty's assurance that old Towser was chained.

The only fear was that the dog would alarm the house, and that fear was soon realized. The voice of Squire Coram was heard speaking to the dog, and it was apparent that he was about to issue from the house with the intention of searching the grounds.

Excelsior was equal to the emergency. He ran to the garden fence, jumped over it and hid in the currant bushes. But he was oppressed by a terrible fear.

"Suppose the squire should turn the dog loose!"

But the squire did nothing of the kind. He looked about the lawn a little, muttering that he was standing in a pot of soft soap which had been made during the day and left out to cool.

"Never mind," he thought. "If she loves me, as I am sure she does, she won't care about the soap."

Again he worked his way toward the house. To his great delight, the dog was now quiet.

There was a light burning in Betty's window, and toward it, as the guiding star of his hope, Excelsior directed his steps. But just as he came beneath the window the light was extinguished.

While he wondered at this a side door opened, and Betty herself appeared before him. She was evidently prepared to elope, and the young man's happiness was complete.

Several of Bishop How's stories relate to weddings. Mr. Ibbotson of St. Michael's, Walthamstow, was marrying a couple, when the ring was found to be too tight. A voice from behind exclaimed, "Suck your finger, you fool!" Again it is related that the rector of Thornhill, near Dewsbury, on one occasion could not get the woman to say "obey" in the marriage service, and he repeated the word with a strong stress on each syllable, saying, "You must say O-be-y." Whereupon the man interferred and said, "Never mind. Go on, parson, I'll make her 'O' by and by."—Good Words.

"My brave Excelsior!" she exclaimed. "My noble Podd! How shall I ever thank you for this? But what is the matter with your shoes? They sound so queer."

"The fact is," stammered the young man, "that I got into a pot of soft soap out here."

"Have you endured that for me? What a splendid fellow you are! I am ready. Let us hurry. Can you get me over the fence rail?" she asked.

"Yes; I put a stepladder there."

"Let us make haste, then."

They reached the fence speedily and without difficulty. Excelsior went over first; then Betty climbed the stepladder and jumped off, and he received her in his arms. Blessed privilege! Glorious possession! He even forgot the soap in his shoes.

He was beginning what he intended to be a very pretty speech, expressive of his love and devotion, when Betty interrupted him.

"There is no time to speak of that now," she said. "I am safe and will be far from here when father awakes. But there is no time to lose."

"Where shall we go, Betty?"

"I will show you. It's all arranged. Come with me."

She led him through the grove to the road, where a horse and buggy were standing. At the horse's head was a man whom Excelsior presently recognized, to his great surprise, as George Deering.

"Why, George, what on earth are you doing here?" he asked.

"I knew what was going on," replied Deering, "and brought a buggy to help the young lady off. I always stand by my friends. Have the kindness to assist Miss Betty into that vehicle, my dear Podd, and soon everything will be lovely."

Excelsior did as he was requested to do and was about to follow the young lady into the buggy when Deering halted him.

"Wait a moment, my dear fellow," said the latter. "We must consult the safety of Miss Betty. No one but myself can manage this horse, and it is necessary that I should get in first."

Excelsior stood aside while the other got in and seated himself by the side of Betty. Deering then whipped up the horse, went ahead a short distance, stopped and looked back.

"Farewell, my dear Excelsior!" he said. "You are the best Podd that ever grew on a bean stalk."

In a few moments the buggy had whirled out of sight.

"I swoon to gracious!" exclaimed Excelsior. "I've a great mind to go and tell the squire."

But he didn't; he went home, cleaned the soap off his clothes and held his tongue.—New York News.

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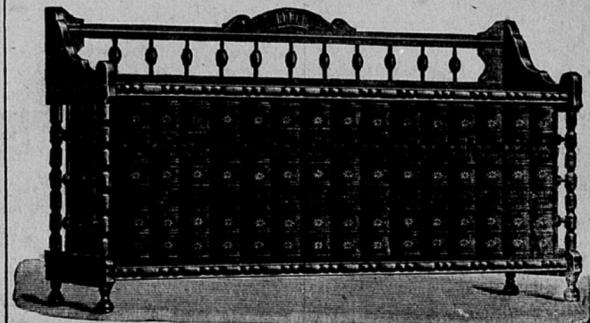
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