

"Yes, two boys. I cannot tell you much about them; but Fred, the elder, is very clever, and the second son, Walter, is a lively boy, who finds pleasure everywhere."

"Ah! I shall like him best."

"Then there is Anzis, a dear little girl, bright as the sunshine and merry as the birds. You will be certain to like your companions."

But, notwithstanding this cheering prospect of playmates, Paul's heart was very heavy when his mother drove with him to the curate's house.

Mother and son clung to each other, weeping. Phillis gave him advice and comfort, and talked as though his experience equalled her own.

Just before parting she said, solemnly, "Paul, you recollect that night when a certain black valise was opened, and money was found within—bank notes and gold?"

"Yes, mother, I remember; I heard all you and father said."

"I am not easy about that money. Your stepfather says every needful thing has been done to find the owner, and I am not clever enough in the English law to argue whether he is right or wrong; but I know there is a grand moral law, speaking direct to the heart and conscience, that tells me the money does not rightly belong to us."

"I know whose it is, mother. The old woman wrote, 'My granddaughter's money. Ten thousand pounds for my dear grandchild, Zara Meldicott Keith.'"

"Right, my boy! And if ever you meet with Zara, if she ever crosses your path in the world, remember those words, and, as far as lies in your power, make restitution to her. I leave you this charge—say you will keep it."

"Of course I will, mmama; I promise it, and will keep my promise."

His voice was faltering, his eyes tearful, and his promise came forth choked in sobs.

Phillis drew out her purse and produced a scrap of paper.

"I have written here all I know about the matter. Keep it, Paul; in years to come it may help your memory, and the *bon Dieu* give you strength to keep your promise."

Not very likely Paul would forget his mother's words, for they were the last she ever spoke to him.

Long before his holiday came round—the time he had so looked and longed for, that he might see her face, and hear her voice again—Phillis was dead.

The end came very rapidly; the doctor who called to see her had said she could not last much longer.

Perhaps Phillis herself did not believe her death was so nigh at hand. She still sat up during the day, with her book, or with the stockings she was trying to finish knitting for Paul—active and occupied to the last.

The change came when she was all alone in her bedroom, just when the rising sun of a May morning was waking up the town to life and action. A shining mass of fleecy white clouds was grandly rolling away across the blue sky, and the sunlight streamed in on her pale face and wide-opened eyes.

When the landlady went up with her breakfast she found Phillis lying speechless and senseless on the pillow; and ere the doctor could be summoned, the struggle was over.

The vexation, the worry, the anxiety that so often shadowed her brow had passed away for ever; the secret of Eternity was hers, and a faint smile had come to her marble lip—the calm, sweet, mysterious smile of death.

(To be continued.)

PECULIARITIES OF THE CHINESE.



A CHINESE IDOL.

We have received the following from a resident of Nankin, China:—

"I am sure you will need no proof that the Chinese are a peculiar people, as this is universally known and acknowledged; but as many of those things in which they are peculiar are not generally known, I venture to mention some of their customs in social and commercial life, and contrast them with our own. As their religions are far more ignorant, superstitious, and sinful than eccentric, I shall not speak much about them now.

The Chinese begin to read their books where we end ours; they read down the page, we across the page; they read from right to left, we from left to right. They direct their letters, writing first the province, then the city, then street or house, and last of all, the name; we direct first the name, then house, street, town, and, last of all, the country. In the language the Chinese have characters many and sounds few; in England we have letters few and sounds many. They believe the heart is the seat of the intellect, that it thinks, perceives, understands, &c., and that the brain is nothing of importance.

The needle of the compass necessarily points to the north, but they take the other end of the compass, and call it pointing to the south. In England we would say north-east

and south-west; but the Chinese say east-north and west-south. We speak of a person's name as Mr. Taylor; they say Tai Sien-sing, which represents Taylor Mr. We say James Taylor; they say Tai Ya-koh, which is equivalent to Taylor James. We write with a pen, they write with a brush; we hold ours slanting, they use theirs perpendicular; when we have finished writing we wipe our pen before laying it aside, they dip theirs in the ink.

The Chinese seat of honour is on the left side, ours is on the right. In England we sit down in boats to row, they stand; we pull, they push; we sit with our backs towards the place we are going, they face the way.

They are not permitted to grow a moustache until they are thirty years of age, nor a beard until they are forty; we of course cultivate ours as soon as we can get them. The majority of women have their feet cramped when they are children, the length of the small feet varies from three inches to six. Children's heads, both boys' and girls', are entirely shaved for the first time when they are about a month old, this is the occasion of great grief to the little one, and there is, as a rule, a "general row in the house." This shaving is continued until they are about eight to twelve years of age, when the hair is permitted to grow.

Chinese mandarins, scholars, and gentlemen allow their nails to grow, frequently to a length of two or three inches, they prize them and love to sport them as much as any young man at home does his first ring; their reason for thus allowing their nails to grow is that they wish to be thought gentlemen who never do any manual labour, nor carry any bags, &c. How much more gentlemanly it would be if they were to help some old man to push his barrow up a hill sometimes!

The Chinese naturally are far from being an enterprising nation. 'As their fathers did, so do they.' They think none wiser than their



CHINESE LADIES.

fathers, so they seek no improvements. But foreign influence is beginning to tell even in this respect, to make the people a little speculative. To call a man *old* is a compliment to a Chinaman, but at home it would, in nine cases out of ten, be deemed an insult. The



A MANDARIN AT HOME.

Chinese clasp their own hands and bow; we grasp the hand of a friend and shake. They administer medicine in large quantities, supposing that the more the patient drinks the better he will be. Occasionally, persons are killed in this way. Some cases have come under the notice of our missionaries, such as where the patient has had dropsy, or where the body has been filled with water, and his faithful wife has been diligently engaged in pouring down his throat as much liquid medicine as possible, until the poor man's death was not only hastened but was caused by the bursting open of his flesh to discharge the water of his over-filled body. The people are for the most part kind to animals, and never like to kill them, not even for food; if they die, all very well, they might cut up the flesh and eat it, but never take its life away.

Some, however, think that to kill very old beasts may be permissible, but not when they are young and able to work; but the Mahomedan Chinese eat beef, mutton, &c., and kill good beasts, so through them we stand some chance of getting meat occasionally. Beggars abound, but they are treated kindly, and I must say this of the Chinese, that I have never seen a beggar turned away receiving nothing.

White is the common colour worn at funerals, and red at weddings. During a time of mourning for a relative, we wear black on the hat, they wear white on their boots and in their cue.

When the father of a mandarin dies, the son has to mourn him for three years, during which time he must do no official work, nor wear any stylish dress, nor enjoy any worldly pleasure. Married women have no Christian name. Suppose one be Mrs. Wang, that is her entire name. They are unfortunately treated everywhere very shabbily. A wife does not walk here side by side with her husband, but she must walk behind, go in last, sit in the lowest place, not speak, &c. Oh! how thankful we should be for the light of the Gospel, and how grateful women in Eng-

land ought to be, and not cry out about their "rights." In England, in making the marriage arrangements, one generally wants a nice wife with some money, but here, of all things most inconvenient, one has to pay for his wife. My teacher tells me that a good wife can be procured at Nankin for about 500 to 700 dollars, equal to £100 to £140. It seems to be similar to poor Jacob, who had to give Laban seven years' labour for each of his wives, because he had no wealth of his own with which to purchase them.

In wedding ceremonies the light of a lamp or candle, although in broad daylight, is considered able to keep away all evil spirits. One of the female assistants (we should say bridesmaids) at the wedding partially fills two cups with a mixture of wine and honey. She then pours their contents back and forth several times from one to the other, when both the bridegroom and the bride sip out of each cup. After being married, the bride's veil is taken from her, and it is often the first time that the bridegroom has seen the face of his wife. At the wedding dinner he eats as much as he likes, but she must not touch a morsel. In the evening the

newly-made wife has to stand while a company of spectators observes her appearance and criticises her deportment. The first night they have two candles burning in their room—one is marked with a dragon to represent the man, the other with a phoenix for the wife. If one or both of these candles should be blown out by any means, they would regard it as an omen indicating the early death of one or both of the parties. If the tallow ran down the candles it would be thought to resemble tears flowing down the cheeks—that they would have sorrow, or that they would not live happily together. If the candles should burn out about the same time, it is supposed the couple will die about the same time in the future, and should one burn much longer than the other it is inferred one will survive the other.

The Chinese are particularly superstitious. They regard the owl as the harbinger of death; it is spoken of as a devil under the guise of a bird, or as a constable from the dark land.

A cat coming to a house is regarded as a sign of approaching poverty, a dog as a sign of prosperity, and the crowing of a cock as a sure sign of something unusual to happen in the family. Where swallows build their nests they believe good luck is sure to follow;

but whoever hears the "Ka-Ka" of the crow will not be successful in the work in which he is engaged. They have a proverb which says, "The magpie has a good voice, but its heart is bad." They believe persons in the next world require food, houses, clothes, &c., just as they do here, so they send these things to them; they make paper houses, boxes, clothes, and all kinds of things, then burn them, and imagine that the smoke carries them into the dark world to make their friends comfortable.

The practice of burning corpses, once very prevalent, still exists in China, though now not to a very great extent; lepers and Buddhist priests are frequently burnt after death.

The popular notion of an eclipse is that a wild sun (some say a dog) tries to eat the sun; hence they call it sun-eating.

When an eclipse takes place the mandarins all assemble at the local temples, burn incense, and worship, the people beating gongs, firing crackers, &c., to rescue the sun from its danger.

A mirage at sea is supposed to be caused by a frog a thousand years old, who descends to the bottom of the sea and, blowing upwards, erects houses, cities, &c., which is the sign of the next "sea-market," but when one approaches it disappears.

The three things most precious to the Chinese, and which they constantly strive to obtain, are whiskers, sons, and wealth, and in speaking of them whiskers take the precedence. If an old man has the slightest pretension to a beard, he is always combing, stroking, and otherwise fondling it, even more than the youths of our own country when they are about 19½. The reason of this is, no doubt, because hair grows so scantily on the Chinese face.

The present Emperor of China is a child six or seven years of age, and amongst his servants he has another little boy about the same age, who has the honour of being punished for His Majesty whenever he is naughty; so you see, in some respects, the Chinese believe in the doctrine of 'substitution.'



A CHINESE GENTLEMAN WITH LONG NAILS.