

## CHINESE MANDARINS AND PEOPLE.

By PROFESSOR DOUGLAS.

THE two qualities which have been conspicuous by their absence in the Chinese army during the present war in the East are precisely those on which military successes chiefly depend—patriotism and efficiency.



A MILITARY MANDARIN.

Love of country apart from pride of empire cannot be said to exist in China, and the disgraceful acts of sordid treachery which have disgraced both the military and naval forces, are such as to make one despair of the country. The idea of a high-placed official who was charged to buy rifles and ammunition for the army, passing off obsolete weapons and useless cartridges at prices which would

have purchased the best and most efficient arms, is well-nigh incredible; while the commanders in the field have evaded engagements with a barefacedness which was hardly to be expected even from the most cynical of mandarins. At Ping-Yang one general withdrew his division because he happened to be suffering from illness, and two other generals retreated in the same way for no other apparent reason than that they wished to avoid the fight. It is some consolation to know that these cautious strategists are being tried by court martial, and that probably they will meet with the fates which they richly deserve.

At Yalu we learn, on the authority of the Chinese admiral, that the captains of two ships took their vessels up the river when the engagements began and only reappeared on the scenes when the firing had ceased. When the officers com-

manding show themselves so deficient in courage, it need not surprise us to learn that the soldiers marching to the front show marked disinclination for the work before them. In a recent letter from Mukden, Mrs. Bishop has described the miserable appearance and halting courage of the levies mustered in that capital. Many regiments, she tells us, are armed only with gingals, others with swords and shields, and some with nothing more than bows and arrows. The men openly proclaim their distaste for the campaign, and engage with such half-heartedness that their battles are likely to be lost before the first shots are fired.

In marked contrast to this flabby condition of the Chinese army, are the zeal and enthusiasm of the Japanese troops. Every man feels that he is fighting for the country which he loves, and for his sovereign, for whom he feels the most devout loyalty. As he marches along he chants war-songs written for the occasion, and carries with him into Korea



A CHINESE SOLDIER.

the memory of the words addressed by the Mikado to the troops when in the act of embarking for the war. No effort is made to excite the spirit of patriotism among the Chinese recruits, and the Em-

peror remains unknown and uncared for in the "Purple Forbidden City" in Peking. The title of "solitary man" which belongs to this potentate is aptly descriptive of



A MOUNTED ARCHER.

his isolated position. "Cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd" within the precincts of the Imperial Palace, the ruler of three hundred million subjects leads a dreary and monotonous existence, which is relieved only by such amusements as the flatterers, both male and female, which surround



THE CHINESE EMPEROR.

him are able to afford. Officially he is the Vicegerent of Heaven, and he claims from his subjects the adoration and respect which is said to belong to his semi-divine position. When he leaves his

palace—which he does only on occasions as rare as the appearance of the Salaminian galley—the houses in the streets through which he passes are carefully closed and shuttered, while the persons who may by chance be on the road as the Imperial *cortège* passes, are bound to throw themselves on their faces so as not to be in a position to gaze on the features of the son of heaven. Loyalty to such an abstraction is next to impossible. He is never brought into personal relationship with his subjects, and is entirely dependent on his political advisers for his knowledge of all that concerns his empire and the world in general. So long as matters go smoothly the illusions in which he lives as to the might of his empire and his own infinite wisdom remain undisturbed. But so soon as events take an adverse turn, and his armies are defeated in the field, the poor nerveless sovereign, as we have recently been told is now the case, vacillates between extreme terror and vain boasting. Suspicion takes the place of former complacency, and the Imperial wrath vents itself with fury on those officials who are rightly or wrongly credited with the mismanagement of affairs.



A CIVIL MANDARIN.

Unfortunately, neither their training nor their natural dispositions are such as to make mandarins wise and judicious councillors. Theoretically, they all reach office by successful competition at the public examinations; but as the subjects required of them do not go beyond an acquaintance with the nine classics of China and the native dynastic histories, their mental vision becomes as narrow and confined as that of a frog at the bottom of a well. They know accurately every detail of their narrow surroundings, but are entirely ignorant of everything beyond their immediate ken. Such people are not safe guides to whom to intrust the destinies of a great empire, and their efficiency is still further reduced by a short-sighted order which regulates their official pay at so low a rate that it is quite inadequate to

support the dignity of their offices. So fully is this recognised, that recourse is had to the strange expedient of granting to each officer an anti-extortion allowance, which commonly amounts to about thirty times his regular salary. But even with this substantial and quaint addition to his emoluments, whether his position be high or low, a mandarin is practically obliged to make the people contribute what the treasury declines to grant. This system at once opens the door to extortion, which

grammatic, maxims are, however, only to them what parables were to the American



法庭  
A TRIBUNAL

varies only in degree; and it is safe to assume that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand mandarins wring from the people such sums as they find their needs and tastes require.



象示犯罪死  
A PRISONER IN A CANGUE.

The contrast between the practices of these rulers of society and the high moral principles which they profess, is one of the strangest features of Chinese life.

Mandarins, who sell justice without compunction, take bribes, and extort illegal exactions, delight to hang on the walls of their offices and studies moral axioms which would do credit to a race of Bayards. These lofty, and often epi-



犯匪枷捕

PRISONER IN A CASK SHAPED CANGUE.

schoolboy—"Heavenly stories with no earthly meaning." But, though shamelessly corrupt, mandarins possess a certain pride which makes them impervious to the remonstrances of foreigners and others against the inhuman cruelties which are perpetrated in their courts in the name of law. The judicial code is fairly humane, though it is disfigured by the sanction which it gives to the use of certain tortures to extract confessions. Unfortunately the inch thus given becomes an ell in most of the Yamêns, and the law which makes it imperative that a criminal must confess his guilt before sentence can be passed upon him is provocative of some of the greatest cruelties which are



某和自兒妾行肉中

PUNISHMENT FOR INFRACTION OF PRIESTLY VOWS.

committed in the torture chambers of China. Only the other day a Japanese was arrested on the charge of being a spy.

As he denied the accusation before the magistrate, torture was applied, and in his agonies he confessed himself to be guilty of the crime ; whether rightly or

balancing the frames on the ground with their neck and shoulders. Occasionally, in the case of heavy cangues, a prisoner in his restless slumbers overbalances the

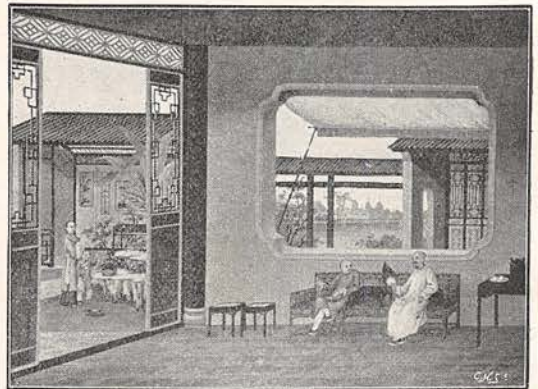


THE EXECUTION OF A MANDARIN.

wrongly will never be known. But, as often happens in such cases, he was induced by the Inquisition to implicate several well-known Chinamen in his offence. These men, we are told, have been sent to Peking to be personally examined by the Emperor, and the agonies in store for them are best left to the imagination.

In a country where examination by torture is so inhuman, punishments are sure to be cruel. Our idea of imprisonment is that it should act as a deterrent from future offences, and should, at least for a time, keep the culprit out of the reach of mischief. The Chinese notion on the subject is that it should be a constant retribution for crimes committed. A Chinese prisoner is therefore subjected to a great deal more than confinement. He is flogged ; he is chained to blocks of stone ; he is bound in unnatural and painful attitudes ; and a large majority of prisoners are made to wear wooden collars or cangues, which vary in weight in proportion to the heinousness of the offender's crime. As these instruments of torture are never removed night or day, the wretched culprits have to sleep as best they can,

frame backwards, when he runs an imminent risk of having his neck broken. A variant of the same punishment is to place the criminal in a tub through the top of which his head alone is allowed to appear, in which position he is entirely dependent on others to supply food to his lips. Of more or less public executions, three forms are commonly in vogue. Offending officials under sentence



A DOMESTIC INTERIOR.

of death, who are able to plead successfully extenuating circumstances, are sometimes graciously allowed to strangle themselves with a silken cord presented

to them by their Imperial master. The ordinary fate, however, which is awarded to grave offenders is decapitation, while the punishment of slicing to death is reserved for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, and for the perpetrators of wholesale butcheries.

It is a relief to turn from the horrid surroundings of Chinese gaols and courts of justice to the dwellings and domestic life of the well-to-do classes among the people. No greater contrast can be imagined than that between the squalid, foul, and unwholesome atmosphere of a Chinese prison and the cool, lofty, and highly-decorated hall of a Chinese gentleman. In our climate such rooms would be eminently uncomfortable, but in the tropics the wide open doors and windows, the absence of stuffs, carpets, and curtains make life enjoyable, even when the thermometer reaches the nineties. The walls are gaily decorated with



A LITERARY LADY.

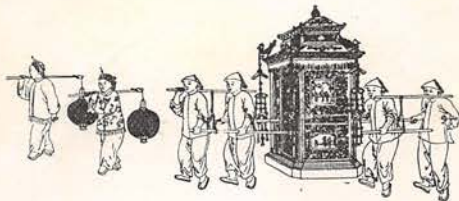


A DOMESTIC RECEPTION ROOM.

long strips bearing the masterpieces of native artists or epigrammatic sayings of the most noted philosophers written by skilful penmen. The different tables and vases are tastefully arranged, and the chairs, though hard and angular, are cool and picturesquely shaped. Through the open window is to be seen the garden gay with flowers and the pond covered with lotus blossoms, among and beside which the ladies and children of the house love to disport themselves. But to the children, and especially the boys, there is a grave future before them, and probably a pavilion among the flowers will be set apart as a study for the young aspirants

to literary degrees. Girls are not under any such obligation to pore over the dreary tomes of Chinese philosophers, and, as a matter of fact, they very seldom learn either to read or write. Occasionally a young lady with a taste for learning emulates the literary zeal of her brothers, and if we are to accept the creations of native novelists as realities, we must believe that there are some Chinese maidens who are gifted with a remarkable power of writing verses.

Very different subjects are commonly supposed to fill the minds of the young ladies. China is the most marrying country in the world. An old maid or an old bachelor in China are as rare as yellow asters on the rest of the globe; and one of the first efforts of a young lady with her needle is to embroider the shoes in which she is destined, at the bidding of her parents and matchmakers, to step into



A BRIDAL CHAIR.

the bridal sedan chair. For some time before that eventful day the bride elect is



A BRIDAL FEAST.

supposed to weep and lament, and on the day itself the formalities she has

to go through are quite enough to justify tears. Her genuflections before her parents before starting to her new home; her prostration before the family tablets as well as heaven and earth when she gets there; and the final feast in which she pledges in a cup of wine the husband whom she has seen that day for the first time, may well make her cover her face with fatigue, bashfulness, and excitement. So soon as the feast is over the young people retire to their apartments, when a new life, with all the uncertainty of untried affections, begins for weal or woe.

