CHAPTER IV

MODERN CHINA

The position of China among the nations of the world is quite peculiar, because in population and potential strength China is the greatest nation in the world, while in actual strength at the moment it is one of the least. The international problems raised by this situation have been brought into the forefront of world-politics by the Washington Conference. What settlement, if any, will ultimately be arrived at, it is as yet impossible to foresee. There are, however, certain broad facts and principles which no wise solution can ignore, for which I shall try to give the evidence in the course of the following chapters, but which it may be as well to state briefly at the outset. First, the Chinese, though as yet incompetent in politics and backward in economic development, have, in other respects, a civilization at least as good as our own, containing elements which the world greatly needs, and which we shall destroy at our peril. Secondly, the Powers have inflicted upon China a multitude of humiliations and disabilities, for which excuses have been found in China's misdeeds, but for which the sole real reason has been China's military and naval weakness. Thirdly, the best of the Great Powers at present, in relation to China, is America, and the worst is Japan; in the interests of China, as well as in our own larger interests, it is an immense advance that we have ceased to support Japan and have ranged ourselves on the side of America, in so far as America

stands for Chinese freedom, but not when Japanese freedom is threatened. Fourthly, in the long run, the Chinese cannot escape economic domination by foreign Powers unless China becomes military or the foreign Powers become Socialistic, because the capitalist system involves in its very essence a predatory relation of the strong towards the weak, internationally as well as nationally. A strong military China would be a disaster; therefore Socialism in Europe and America affords the only ultimate solution.

After these preliminary remarks, I come to the theme of this chapter, namely, the present internal condition of China.

As everyone knows, China, after having an Emperor for forty centuries, decided, eleven years ago, to become a modern democratic republic. Many causes led up to this result. Passing over the first 3,700 years of Chinese history, we arrive at the Manchu conquest in 1644, when a warlike invader from the north succeeded in establishing himself upon the Dragon Throne. He set to work to induce Chinese men to wear pigtails and Chinese women to have big feet. After a time a statesmanlike compromise was arranged: pigtails were adopted but big feet were rejected; the new absurdity was accepted and the old one retained. This characteristic compromise shows how much England and China have in common.

The Manchu Emperors soon became almost completely Chinese, but differences of dress and manners kept the Manchus distinct from the

more civilized people whom they had conquered, and the Chinese remained inwardly hostile to them. From 1840 to 1900, a series of disastrous foreign wars, culminating in the humiliation of the Boxer time, destroyed the prestige of the Imperial Family and showed all thoughtful people the need of learning from Europeans. The Taiping rebellion, which lasted for 15 years (1849-64), is thought by Putnam Weale to have diminished the population by 150 millions,[31] and was almost as terrible a business as the Great War. For a long time it seemed doubtful whether the Manchus could suppress it, and when at last they succeeded (by the help of Gordon) their energy was exhausted. The defeat of China by Japan (1894-5) and the vengeance of the Powers after the Boxer rising (1900) finally opened the eyes of all thoughtful Chinese to the need for a better and more modern government than that of the Imperial Family. But things move slowly in China, and it was not till eleven years after the Boxer movement that the revolution broke out.

The revolution of 1911, in China, was a moderate one, similar in spirit to ours of 1688. Its chief promoter, Sun Yat Sen, now at the head of the Canton Government, was supported by the Republicans, and was elected provisional President. But the Nothern Army remained faithful to the dynasty, and could probably have defeated the revolutionaries. Its Commander-in-Chief, Yuan Shih-k'ai, however, hit upon a better scheme. He made peace with the revolutionaries and acknowledged the Republic, on condition that he should be the first President instead of Sun Yat Sen. Yuan Shih-k'ai was, of course, supported by the Legations, being what is called a "strong man," i.e. a believer in blood and iron, not likely

to be led astray by talk about democracy or freedom. In China, the North has always been more military and less liberal than the South, and Yuan Shih-k'ai had created out of Northern troops whatever China possessed in the way of a modern army. As he was also ambitious and treacherous, he had every quality needed for inspiring confidence in the diplomatic corps. In view of the chaos which has existed since his death, it must be admitted, however, that there was something to be said in favour of his policy and methods.

A Constituent Assembly, after enacting a provisional constitution, gave place to a duly elected Parliament, which met in April 1913 to determine the permanent constitution. Yuan soon began to quarrel with the Parliament as to the powers of the President, which the Parliament wished to restrict. The majority in Parliament was opposed to Yuan, but he had the preponderance in military strength. Under these circumstances, as was to be expected, constitutionalism was soon overthrown. Yuan made himself financially independent of Parliament (which had been duly endowed with the power of the purse) by unconstitutionally concluding a loan with the foreign banks. This led to a revolt of the South, which, however, Yuan quickly suppressed. After this, by various stages, he made himself virtually absolute ruler of China. He appointed his army lieutenants military governors of provinces, and sent Northern troops into the South. His régime might have lasted but for the fact that, in 1915, he tried to become Emperor, and was met by a successful revolt. He died in 1916--of a broken heart, it was said.

Since then there has been nothing but confusion in China. The military governors appointed by Yuan refused to submit to the Central Government when his strong hand was removed, and their troops terrorized the populations upon whom they were quartered. Ever since there has been civil war, not, as a rule, for any definite principle, but simply to determine which of various rival generals should govern various groups of provinces. There still remains the issue of North versus South, but this has lost most of its constitutional significance.

The military governors of provinces or groups of provinces, who are called Tuchuns, govern despotically in defiance of Peking, and commit depredations on the inhabitants of the districts over which they rule. They intercept the revenue, except the portions collected and administered by foreigners, such as the salt tax. They are nominally appointed by Peking, but in practice depend only upon the favour of the soldiers in their provinces. The Central Government is nearly bankrupt, and is usually unable to pay the soldiers, who live by loot and by such portions of the Tuchun's illgotten wealth as he finds it prudent to surrender to them. When any faction seemed near to complete victory, the Japanese supported its opponents, in order that civil discord might be prolonged. While I was in Peking, the three most important Tuchuns met there for a conference on the division of the spoils. They were barely civil to the President and the Prime Minister, who still officially represent China in the eyes of foreign Powers. The unfortunate nominal Government was obliged to pay to these three worthies, out of a bankrupt

treasury, a sum which the newspapers stated to be nine million dollars, to secure their departure from the capital. The largest share went to Chang-tso-lin, the Viceroy of Manchuria and commonly said to be a tool of Japan. His share was paid to cover the expenses of an expedition to Mongolia, which had revolted; but no one for a moment supposed that he would undertake such an expedition, and in fact he has remained at Mukden ever since.[32]

In the extreme south, however, there has been established a Government of a different sort, for which it is possible to have some respect. Canton, which has always been the centre of Chinese radicalism, succeeded, in the autumn of 1920, in throwing off the tyranny of its Northern garrison and establishing a progressive efficient Government under the Presidency of Sun Yat Sen. This Government now embraces two provinces, Kwangtung (of which Canton is the capital) and Kwangsi. For a moment it seemed likely to conquer the whole of the South, but it has been checked by the victories of the Northern General Wu-Pei-Fu in the neighbouring province of Hunan. Its enemies allege that it cherishes designs of conquest, and wishes to unite all China under its sway.[33] In all ascertainable respects it is a Government which deserves the support of all progressive people. Professor Dewey, in articles in the New Republic, has set forth its merits, as well as the bitter enmity which it has encountered from Hong-Kong and the British generally. This opposition is partly on general principles, because we dislike radical reform, partly because of the Cassel agreement. This agreement--of a common type in China--would have given us a virtual monopoly of the

railways and mines in the province of Kwangtung. It had been concluded with the former Government, and only awaited ratification, but the change of Government has made ratification impossible. The new Government, very properly, is befriended by the Americans, and one of them, Mr. Shank, concluded an agreement with the new Government more or less similar to that which we had concluded with the old one. The American Government, however, did not support Mr. Shank, whereas the British Government did support the Cassel agreement. Meanwhile we have lost a very valuable though very iniquitous concession, merely because we, but not the Americans, prefer what is old and corrupt to what is vigorous and honest. I understand, moreover, that the Shank agreement lapsed because Mr. Shank could not raise the necessary capital.

The anarchy in China is, of course, very regrettable, and every friend of China must hope that it will be brought to an end. But it would be a mistake to exaggerate the evil, or to suppose that it is comparable in magnitude to the evils endured in Europe. China must not be compared to a single European country, but to Europe as a whole. In The Times of November 11, 1921, I notice a pessimistic article headed: "The Peril of China. A dozen rival Governments." But in Europe there are much more than a dozen Governments, and their enmities are much fiercer than those of China. The number of troops in Europe is enormously greater than in China, and they are infinitely better provided with weapons of destruction. The amount of fighting in Europe since the Armistice has been incomparably more than the amount in China during the same period. You may travel through China from end to end, and it is ten to one that

you will see no signs of war. Chinese battles are seldom bloody, being fought by mercenary soldiers who take no interest in the cause for which they are supposed to be fighting. I am inclined to think that the inhabitants of China, at the present moment, are happier, on the average, than the inhabitants of Europe taken as a whole.

It is clear, I think, that political reform in China, when it becomes possible, will have to take the form of a federal constitution, allowing a very large measure of autonomy to the provinces. The division into provinces is very ancient, and provincial feeling is strong. After the revolution, a constitution more or less resembling our own was attempted, only with a President instead of a King. But the successful working of a non-federal constitution requires a homogeneous population without much local feeling, as may be seen from our own experience in Ireland. Most progressive Chinese, as far as I was able to judge, now favour a federal constitution, leaving to the Central Government not much except armaments, foreign affairs, and customs. But the difficulty of getting rid of the existing military anarchy is very great. The Central Government cannot disband the troops, because it cannot find the money to pay them. It would be necessary to borrow from abroad enough money to pay off the troops and establish them in new jobs. But it is doubtful whether any Power or Powers would make such a loan without exacting the sacrifice of the last remnants of Chinese independence. One must therefore hope that somehow the Chinese will find a way of escaping from their troubles without too much foreign assistance.

It is by no means impossible that one of the Tuchuns may become supreme, and may then make friends with the constitutionalists as the best way of consolidating his influence. China is a country where public opinion has great weight, and where the desire to be thought well of may quite possibly lead a successful militarist into patriotic courses. There are, at the moment, two Tuchuns who are more important than any of the others. These are Chang-tso-lin and Wu-Pei-Fu, both of whom have been already mentioned. Chang-tso-lin is supreme in Manchuria, and strong in Japanese support; he represents all that is most reactionary in China. Wu-Pei-Fu, on the other hand, is credited with liberal tendencies. He is an able general; not long ago, nominally at the bidding of Peking, he established his authority on the Yangtze and in Hunan, thereby dealing a blow to the hopes of Canton. It is not easy to see how he could come to terms with the Canton Government, especially since it has allied itself with Chang-tso-lin, but in the rest of China he might establish his authority and seek to make it permanent by being constitutional (see Appendix). If so, China might have a breathing-space, and a breathing-space is all that is needed.

The economic life of China, except in the Treaty Ports and in a few regions where there are mines, is still wholly pre-industrial. Peking has nearly a million inhabitants, and covers an enormous area, owing to the fact that all the houses have only a ground floor and are built round a courtyard. Yet it has no trams or buses or local trains. So far as I could see, there are not more than two or three factory chimneys in

the whole town. Apart from begging, trading, thieving and Government employment, people live by handicrafts. The products are exquisite and the work less monotonous than machine-minding, but the hours are long and the pay infinitesimal.

Seventy or eighty per cent. of the population of China are engaged in agriculture. Rice and tea are the chief products of the south, while wheat and other kinds of grain form the staple crops in the north.[34] The rainfall is very great in the south, but in the north it is only just sufficient to prevent the land from being a desert. When I arrived in China, in the autumn of 1920, a large area in the north, owing to drought, was afflicted with a terrible famine, nearly as bad, probably, as the famine in Russia in 1921. As the Bolsheviks were not concerned, foreigners had no hesitation in trying to bring relief. As for the Chinese, they regarded it passively as a stroke of fate, and even those who died of it shared this view.

Most of the land is in the hands of peasant proprietors, who divide their holdings among their sons, so that each man's share becomes barely sufficient to support himself and his family. Consequently, when the rainfall is less than usual, immense numbers perish of starvation. It would of course be possible, for a time, to prevent famines by more scientific methods of agriculture, and to prevent droughts and floods by afforestation. More railways and better roads would give a vastly improved market, and might greatly enrich the peasants for a generation. But in the long run, if the birth-rate is as great as is usually

supposed, no permanent cure for their poverty is possible while their families continue to be so large. In China, Malthus's theory of population, according to many writers, finds full scope.[35] If so, the good done by any improvement of methods will lead to the survival of more children, involving a greater subdivision of the land, and in the end, a return to the same degree of poverty. Only education and a higher standard of life can remove the fundamental cause of these evils. And popular education, on a large scale, is of course impossible until there is a better Government and an adequate revenue. Apart even from these difficulties, there does not exist, as yet, a sufficient supply of competent Chinese teachers for a system of universal elementary education.

Apart from war, the impact of European civilization upon the traditional life of China takes two forms, one commercial, the other intellectual. Both depend upon the prestige of armaments; the Chinese would never have opened either their ports to our trade or their minds to our ideas if we had not defeated them in war. But the military beginning of our intercourse with the Middle Kingdom has now receded into the background; one is not conscious, in any class, of a strong hostility to foreigners as such. It would not be difficult to make out a case for the view that intercourse with the white races is proving a misfortune to China, but apparently this view is not taken by anyone in China except where unreasoning conservative prejudice outweighs all other considerations. The Chinese have a very strong instinct for trade, and a considerable intellectual curiosity, to both of which we appeal. Only a bare minimum

of common decency is required to secure their friendship, whether privately or politically. And I think their thought is as capable of enriching our culture as their commerce of enriching our pockets.

In the Treaty Ports, Europeans and Americans live in their own quarters, with streets well paved and lighted, houses in European style, and shops full of American and English goods. There is generally also a Chinese part of the town, with narrow streets, gaily decorated shops, and the rich mixture of smells characteristic of China. Often one passes through a gate, suddenly, from one to the other; after the cheerful disordered beauty of the old town, Europe's ugly cleanliness and Sunday-go-to-meeting decency make a strange complex impression, half-love and half-hate. In the European town one finds safety, spaciousness and hygiene; in the Chinese town, romance, overcrowding and disease. In spite of my affection for China, these transitions always made me realize that I am a European; for me, the Chinese manner of life would not mean happiness. But after making all necessary deductions for the poverty and the disease, I am inclined to think that Chinese life brings more happiness to the Chinese than English life does to us. At any rate this seemed to me to be true for the men; for the women I do not think it would be true.

Shanghai and Tientsin are white men's cities; the first sight of Shanghai makes one wonder what is the use of travelling, because there is so little change from what one is used to. Treaty Ports, each of which is a centre of European influence, exist practically all over

China, not only on the sea coast. Hankow, a very important Treaty Port, is almost exactly in the centre of China. North and South China are divided by the Yangtze; East and West China are divided by the route from Peking to Canton. These two dividing lines meet at Hankow, which has long been an important strategical point in Chinese history. From Peking to Hankow there is a railway, formerly Franco-Belgian, now owned by the Chinese Government. From Wuchang, opposite Hankow on the southern bank of the river, there is to be a railway to Canton, but at present it only runs half-way, to Changsha, also a Treaty Port. The completion of the railway, together with improved docks, will greatly increase the importance of Canton and diminish that of Hong-Kong.

In the Treaty Ports commerce is the principal business; but in the lower Yangtze and in certain mining districts there are beginnings of industrialism. China produces large amounts of raw cotton, which are mostly manipulated by primitive methods; but there are a certain number of cotton-mills on modern lines. If low wages meant cheap labour for the employer, there would be little hope for Lancashire, because in Southern China the cotton is grown on the spot, the climate is damp, and there is an inexhaustible supply of industrious coolies ready to work very long hours for wages upon which an English working-man would find it literally impossible to keep body and soul together. Nevertheless, it is not the underpaid Chinese coolie whom Lancashire has to fear, and China will not become a formidable competitor until improvement in methods and education enables the Chinese workers to earn good wages. Meanwhile, in China, as in every other country, the beginnings of industry are sordid

and cruel. The intellectuals wish to be told of some less horrible method by which their country may be industrialized, but so far none is in sight.

The intelligentsia in China has a very peculiar position, unlike that which it has in any other country. Hereditary aristocracy has been practically extinct in China for about 2,000 years, and for many centuries the country has been governed by the successful candidates in competitive examinations. This has given to the educated the kind of prestige elsewhere belonging to a governing aristocracy. Although the old traditional education is fast dying out, and higher education now teaches modern subjects, the prestige of education has survived, and public opinion is still ready to be influenced by those who have intellectual qualifications. The Tuchuns, many of whom, including Chang-tso-lin, have begun by being brigands,[36] are, of course, mostly too stupid and ignorant to share this attitude, but that in itself makes their régime weak and unstable. The influence of Young China--i.e. of those who have been educated either abroad or in modern colleges at home--is far greater than it would be in a country with less respect for learning. This is, perhaps, the most hopeful feature in the situation, because the number of modern students is rapidly increasing, and their outlook and aims are admirable. In another ten years or so they will probably be strong enough to regenerate China--if only the Powers will allow ten years to elapse without taking any drastic action.

It is important to try to understand the outlook and potentialities of

Young China. Most of my time was spent among those Chinese who had had a modern education, and I should like to give some idea of their mentality. It seemed to me that one could already distinguish two generations: the older men, who had fought their way with great difficulty and almost in solitude out of the traditional Confucian prejudices; and the younger men, who had found modern schools and colleges waiting for them, containing a whole world of modern-minded people ready to give sympathy and encouragement in the inevitable fight against the family. The older men--men varying in age from 30 to 50--have gone through an inward and outward struggle resembling that of the rationalists of Darwin's and Mill's generation. They have had, painfully and with infinite difficulty, to free their minds from the beliefs instilled in youth, and to turn their thoughts to a new science and a new ethic. Imagine (say) Plotinus recalled from the shades and miraculously compelled to respect Mr. Henry Ford; this will give you some idea of the centuries across which these men have had to travel in becoming European. Some of them are a little weary with the effort, their forces somewhat spent and their originality no longer creative. But this can astonish no one who realizes the internal revolution they have achieved in their own minds.

It must not be supposed that an able Chinaman, when he masters our culture, becomes purely imitative. This may happen among the second-rate Chinese, especially when they turn Christians, but it does not happen among the best. They remain Chinese, critical of European civilization even when they have assimilated it. They retain a certain crystal

candour and a touching belief in the efficacy of moral forces; the industrial revolution has not yet affected their mental processes. When they become persuaded of the importance of some opinion, they try to spread it by setting forth the reasons in its favour; they do not hire the front pages of newspapers for advertising, or put up on hoardings along the railways "So-and-so's opinion is the best." In all this they differ greatly from more advanced nations, and particularly from America; it never occurs to them to treat opinions as if they were soaps. And they have no admiration for ruthlessness, or love of bustling activity without regard to its purpose. Having thrown over the prejudices in which they were brought up, they have not taken on a new set, but have remained genuinely free in their thoughts, able to consider any proposition honestly on its merits.

The younger men, however, have something more than the first generation of modern intellectuals. Having had less of a struggle, they have retained more energy and self-confidence. The candour and honesty of the pioneers survive, with more determination to be socially effective. This may be merely the natural character of youth, but I think it is more than that. Young men under thirty have often come in contact with Western ideas at a sufficiently early age to have assimilated them without a great struggle, so that they can acquire knowledge without being torn by spiritual conflicts. And they have been able to learn Western knowledge from Chinese teachers to begin with, which has made the process less difficult. Even the youngest students, of course, still have reactionary families, but they find less difficulty than their

predecessors in resisting the claims of the family, and in realizing practically, not only theoretically, that the traditional Chinese reverence for the old may well be carried too far. In these young men I see the hope of China. When a little experience has taught them practical wisdom, I believe they will be able to lead Chinese opinion in the directions in which it ought to move.

There is one traditional Chinese belief which dies very hard, and that is the belief that correct ethical sentiments are more important then detailed scientific knowledge. This view is, of course, derived from the Confucian tradition, and is more or less true in a pre-industrial society. It would have been upheld by Rousseau or Dr. Johnson, and broadly speaking by everybody before the Benthamites. We, in the West, have now swung to the opposite extreme: we tend to think that technical efficiency is everything and moral purpose nothing. A battleship may be taken as the concrete embodiment of this view. When we read, say, of some new poison-gas by means of which one bomb from an aeroplane can exterminate a whole town, we have a thrill of what we fondly believe to be horror, but it is really delight in scientific skill. Science is our god; we say to it, "Though thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee." And so it slays us. The Chinese have not this defect, but they have the opposite one, of believing that good intentions are the only thing really necessary. I will give an illustration. Forsythe Sherfesee, Forestry Adviser to the Chinese Government, gave an address at the British Legation in January 1919 on "Some National Aspects of Forestry in China."[37] In this address he proves (so far as a person ignorant of

forestry can judge) that large parts of China which now lie waste are suitable for forestry, that the importation of timber (e.g. for railway sleepers) which now takes place is wholly unnecessary, and that the floods which often sweep away whole districts would be largely prevented if the slopes of the mountains from which the rivers come were reafforested. Yet it is often difficult to interest even the most reforming Chinese in afforestation, because it is not an easy subject for ethical enthusiasm. Trees are planted round graves, because Confucius said they should be; if Confucianism dies out, even these will be cut down. But public-spirited Chinese students learn political theory as it is taught in our universities, and despise such humble questions as the utility of trees. After learning all about (say) the proper relations of the two Houses of Parliament, they go home to find that some Tuchun has dismissed both Houses, and is governing in a fashion not considered in our text-books. Our theories of politics are only true in the West (if there); our theories of forestry are equally true everywhere. Yet it is our theories of politics that Chinese students are most eager to learn. Similarly the practical study of industrial processes might be very useful, but the Chinese prefer the study of our theoretical economics, which is hardly applicable except where industry is already developed. In all these respects, however, there is beginning to be a marked improvement.

It is science that makes the difference between our intellectual outlook and that of the Chinese intelligentsia. The Chinese, even the most modern, look to the white nations, especially America, for moral maxims

to replace those of Confucius. They have not yet grasped that men's morals in the mass are the same everywhere: they do as much harm as they dare, and as much good as they must. In so far as there is a difference of morals between us and the Chinese, we differ for the worse, because we are more energetic, and can therefore commit more crimes per diem. What we have to teach the Chinese is not morals, or ethical maxims about government, but science and technical skill. The real problem for the Chinese intellectuals is to acquire Western knowledge without acquiring the mechanistic outlook.

Perhaps it is not clear what I mean by "the mechanistic outlook." I mean something which exists equally in Imperialism, Bolshevism and the Y.M.C.A.; something which distinguishes all these from the Chinese outlook, and which I, for my part, consider very evil. What I mean is the habit of regarding mankind as raw material, to be moulded by our scientific manipulation into whatever form may happen to suit our fancy. The essence of the matter, from the point of view of the individual who has this point of view, is the cultivation of will at the expense of perception, the fervent moral belief that it is our duty to force other people to realize our conception of the world. The Chinese intellectual is not much troubled by Imperialism as a creed, but is vigorously assailed by Bolshevism and the Y.M.C.A., to one or other of which he is too apt to fall a victim, learning a belief from the one in the class-war and the dictatorship of the communists, from the other in the mystic efficacy of cold baths and dumb-bells. Both these creeds, in their Western adepts, involve a contempt for the rest of mankind except

as potential converts, and the belief that progress consists in the spread of a doctrine. They both involve a belief in government and a life against Nature. This view, though I have called it mechanistic, is as old as religion, though mechanism has given it new and more virulent forms. The first of Chinese philosophers, Lao-Tze, wrote his book to protest against it, and his disciple Chuang-Tze put his criticism into a fable[38]:--

> Horses have hoofs to carry them over frost and snow; hair, to protect them from wind and cold. They eat grass and drink water, and fling up their heels over the champaign. Such is the real nature of horses. Palatial dwellings are of no use to them.
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> One day Po Lo appeared, saying: "I understand the management of horses."
>
> So he branded them, and clipped them, and pared their hoofs, and put halters on them, tying them up by the head and shackling them by the feet, and disposing them in stables, with the result that two or three in every ten died. Then he kept them hungry and thirsty, trotting them and galloping them, and grooming, and trimming, with the misery of the tasselled bridle before and the fear of the knotted whip behind, until more than half of them were dead.
>
> The potter says: "I can do what I will with clay. If I want it

round, I use compasses; if rectangular, a square."

The carpenter says: "I can do what I will with wood. If I want it curved, I use an arc; if straight, a line."

But on what grounds can we think that the natures of clay and wood desire this application of compasses and square, of arc and line? Nevertheless, every age extols Po Lo for his skill in managing horses, and potters and carpenters for their skill with clay and wood. Those who govern the Empire make the same mistake.

Although Taoism, of which Lao-Tze was the founder and Chuang-Tze the chief apostle, was displaced by Confucianism, yet the spirit of this fable has penetrated deeply into Chinese life, making it more urbane and tolerant, more contemplative and observant, than the fiercer life of the West. The Chinese watch foreigners as we watch animals in the Zoo, to see whether they "drink water and fling up their heels over the champaign," and generally to derive amusement from their curious habits. Unlike the Y.M.C.A., they have no wish to alter the habits of the foreigners, any more than we wish to put the monkeys at the Zoo into trousers and stiff shirts. And their attitude towards each other is, as a rule, equally tolerant. When they became a Republic, instead of cutting off the Emperor's head, as other nations do, they left him his title, his palace, and four million dollars a year (about £600,000), and he remains to this moment with his officials, his eunuchs and his

etiquette, but without one shred of power or influence. In talking with a Chinese, you feel that he is trying to understand you, not to alter you or interfere with you. The result of his attempt may be a caricature or a panegyric, but in either case it will be full of delicate perception and subtle humour. A friend in Peking showed me a number of pictures, among which I specially remember various birds: a hawk swooping on a sparrow, an eagle clasping a big bough of a tree in his claws, water-fowl standing on one leg disconsolate in the snow. All these pictures showed that kind of sympathetic understanding which one feels also in their dealings with human beings--something which I can perhaps best describe as the antithesis of Nietzsche. This quality, unfortunately, is useless in warfare, and foreign nations are doing their best to stamp it out. But it is an infinitely valuable quality, of which our Western world has far too little. Together with their exquisite sense of beauty, it makes the Chinese nation quite extraordinarily lovable. The injury that we are doing to China is wanton and cruel, the destruction of something delicate and lovely for the sake of the gross pleasures of barbarous millionaires. One of the poems translated from the Chinese by Mr. Waley[39] is called Business Men, and it expresses, perhaps more accurately than I could do, the respects in which the Chinese are our superiors:--

Business men boast of their skill and cunning
But in philosophy they are like little children.
Bragging to each other of successful depredations
They neglect to consider the ultimate fate of the body.

What should they know of the Master of Dark Truth
Who saw the wide world in a jade cup,
By illumined conception got clear of heaven and earth:
On the chariot of Mutation entered the Gate of Immutability?

I wish I could hope that some respect for "the Master of Dark Truth" would enter into the hearts of our apostles of Western culture. But as that is out of the question, it is necessary to seek other ways of solving the Far Eastern question.