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Second Lecture of Mr. Fletcher Webster on "China and the Chinese." From the Report of the N. Y. Com. Advertiser.

Mr. Webster delivered his second lecture on the manners and customs of the Chinese, to a large, intelligent and attentive audience.

After some brief prefatory remarks, he resumed the subject of the municipal government of China, and said that while the government in its police department was prompt and vigorous, the thieves on the other hand, were expert and daring. The members of the legation on their arrival at Macao, were warned against burglars. These strip themselves, oil their persons, and put sharp knives in their hair, the only part by which they can be seized, so as to cut the fingers of any one attempting to arrest them. They never enter a dark room, thus reversing the practice of their profession in this and other countries.

But everything must be reversed here. The Chinese do nothing as we do. Their night is our day; their West our East; two friends when they meet shake their hands at each other—a safe practice, certainly, where, as in China, cutaneous diseases are common; their mourning dresses are white; their compass points to the South; they put their saucers on top of their cups; they are certain that the sun goes round their earth, and they know that the earth is flat and square. Parents are rewarded for the virtues of their children; and indeed they have every thing peculiar to themselves. And of course the habits of their thieves must be peculiar also.

One of the gentlemen of the legation fell asleep leaving the window of his bedroom open. Two burglars by the aid of a bamboo scaled the window, looked in and seeing that the gentleman was fast asleep, stepped without noise into the chamber, secured his pistol and drawn sword, and while one probably closely watched him, the other stripped the room and decamped. In the morning there was great excitement, and had the gentleman been willing to punish the innocent with the guilty, he might doubtless have recovered the whole of the property. He preferred, however, the opposite course, and the matter was allowed to pass over.

Where a foreigner takes a house, said Mr. Webster, some one presents himself as steward, or *comprador*, generally a person of some property, who offers security for his ability and honor.

He is hired at so much a month, or undertakes his duties for a commission on all he purchases, and a modicum from each servant. He has charge of every thing in any way connected with the domestic affairs of the household. He hires all the servants, is responsible for them all, holds all the keys, and relieves the owner of every possible care. If anything is lost or stolen he must replace it; and he in turn holds all his underlings responsible to him. If anything is destroyed by that—with us—so mischievous person, *Nobody*, the servants must combine to make it up; and in the case of theft already mentioned, had the loser followed it up, the steward would have been responsible for the conduct of the watchmen, and probably all the servants would have been bamboozed. By this system one great point is secured;—namely the certainty of punishment for every crime.—Some one is sure to be held responsible. As rain is proportioned to the evaporation, so is punishment to crime; and in China, punishment, like rain also, falls upon the just and the unjust.

Their code of civil and criminal law is very voluminous in detail. There is nothing which man can do or leave undone that is not provided for, and besides the social regulations of other codes, it contains directions for all the rights and ceremonies of religion and worship, and regulates all the modes of social intercourse; the most ordinary civilities of life, the different modes of salutation to a brother, a parent, or between friends and relatives. Even the style of courtship is prescribed by law, though I am not quite sure, said Mr. W., that the tariff is strictly observed in this matter, and am rather inclined to think that a contraband sigh or glance is sometimes indulged in. Even the season of the year is regulated, and is at the disposition of the chief Mandarin, who puts on his appropriate dress, and summer or winter it is, at least, in his district. As on board a man-of-war, when the officer of the deck reports that by the sun it should be 12 o'clock, he is ordered to "make it so."

The present reigning family is of Mantchoo Tartar origin. In 1644 the Tartars, who till that time had been tributary to the Chinese, and whose territories lay on the outside of the great wall, seized upon the government and have hitherto retained possession. The present Emperor Taoukwang, is an aged man, and is the grandson of the Emperor by whom Lord Macartney, the English Envoy, was received, and who wrote the celebrated *tea ode* which so greatly pleased Voltaire. He was appointed successor to the throne on account of his valiant defence of his father in an insurrection of the palace guards; for the monarch has the right to appoint from one of his sons the one who shall fill the throne after him.

The surname of the sovereign, which is a word signifying *Reason's Glory*, it is a privilege to pronounce; though Mr. Webster thought the usage similar to that which obtains in Europe, where the monarch's surname is never heard. The advantage to power of the Tartar dynasty wrought no change in the laws of the empire, and was in fact but little more than a change of administration in this country, except that the decapitation, which in both cases takes place to about the same

amount, is in China *real*, while here it is but *figurative*. The slaughter which attended their conquest was very great, the Dutch Ambassador, who at that time travelled from Canton to Peking, records that his way was over devastated and ravaged plains and sacked cities, whose countless inhabitants had fallen beneath the sword of the victorious Tartars. The only innovation that took place was that the custom of shaving the head, which before had been confined to the Tartars, was made universal, so that no obvious token of distinction between the two races might remain. It might be said, with almost literal truth, that all China was shaved in a day. Some mountaineers still remain unshaved to the Tartar government.

It was curious, observed Mr. Webster, to trace the many national customs regarding the dressing of the hair. The Tartars and Turks shave off all but one lock, by which they hope to be pulled into Paradise. The Ceylonese dress their hair as our ladies used to do, with tortoise shell combs, &c. The Chinese tail, he thought was the origin of the Indian scalp-lock.—This topic Mr. W. pursued at some length and clothed it with considerable interest. The Chinese have no hereditary aristocracy, or distinctions of social rank.—Their dignities are all official, all the people being, in theory, equally the children of the Emperor, belonging to one family, equal in rank and blood. Birth and wealth are more disregarded there than in any other part of the world, more even than in this country. Except the immediate relatives of the Emperor, who enjoy the privilege of wearing the yellow sash, and the followers of Confucius, who have a similar right, no one man is better than another; and even the Emperor's relations rapidly lose rank with every descent. In the theory and in practice, the highest stations are the rewards of good conduct and of scholarship. Schools are universally established and education is provided, for even the poorest and most obscure. Wealth is regarded solely as a means of usefulness, and it is freely dispensed for purposes of benevolence. It is said that recently, since the royal treasury has been empty, the dignities of the College, which always open the way to high offices in the state, have been purchased for money; but any one who thus obtains high place, when it is known, does not enjoy the respect and honor which the place would confer on one who had won it by his own merits and exertions. Of this Mr. W. gave corroborative facts coming under his observation. He remarked that the Duke of Kwang was the son of a hong merchant, and was attached to the mission because of his knowledge of commerce, and his skill in the two dialects of the province. He was better informed than any of the rest and anxious to learn more. He was hospitable, perfectly courteous and of great liberality, having during the stay of the embassy purchased two entire cargoes of rice for distribution among the poor.

There are nine degrees of official rank, distinguished by the button worn upon the top of the cap and by the peacock's feather. The highest is that of Kwang, which corresponds with Duke, and confers the right to wear the red button and a two-eyed peacock's feather. All these degrees of rank are bestowed as the rewards of personal service or merit, and confer no honor upon descendants. The general affairs of the empire are managed by several boards at Peking; these are the boards of rites and ceremonies; of finance and revenue; of war; of works [of this board Keying is a member;] of foreign affairs and dependent states, and of justice and punishment. There are also two councils, one of which forms the Emperor's Cabinet; and above all these is a board of censors, which reviews the proceedings of the rest. It was a question of no little difficulty, with which of the boards mentioned Lords Macartney and Amherst should transact their business; and it was finally settled that they should negotiate through the board of "foreign affairs and dependent states," because, by bringing presents, the English embassy had come in that capacity. They were consequently received in the same way and by the same functionaries as the Indian delegations are with us. It was found impossible for us to obtain consent to correspond with Peking. When the topic was mentioned, Keying said that he would attend to that, as he, being superintendent of the five open ports, was the proper person.—All that had been attained is the right to address any one of these boards.

The principles of a patriarchal Government were then discussed by Mr. W., showing that filial obedience is its foundation. Hence the Chinese code is not silent upon that subject. No means are omitted to deepen, enlarge and strengthen this feeling. Respect for parents and ancestors is held to be the first of duties, the foremost of political and religious obligations. Unusual instances of filial devotion are publicly rewarded; the names of those by whom they are performed are held up to admiration, and handed down as household words to succeeding generations, and their history made the text book for the young. Reversing the European mode, in China parents are rewarded for the virtues and abilities of their children; and the parent of worthy children dies, an obituary in honor of him is prepared, for it is

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held he must have been a good father, and worthy of honor, to rear such virtuous and worthy children. Some frequently interpose and request to be punished for the offences of their parents; nor is this so rare as to be considered extraordinary. Love for parents is the strongest sentiment in the breast of a Chinese. No change of domestic ties affects it, and death but elevates it into a religious rite and veneration. It holds the same place in China as with us does affection for a wife; and in China will every son, even as did Aeneas,

convey his father from instant and overwhelming peril to which his wife and children will be abandoned. The halls of the rich are always adorned with figures of their ancestors, and in their temple, the worship of deceased forefathers is a prominent and favorite devotion. Some one or two days of every season are set apart to visit their ancestral tombs, built upon the sides of the hills.—They go in families and offer sacrifices and strew flowers over their graves.—When these rites are ended they partake of a family feast, seated in enclosures around the tombs; cover the tables with pieces of colored paper, which represent various fruits and viands, and which are burned, to carry upward food for their deceased ancestors. And then on retiring from these sacred resorts, little flags of colored paper are put up in various spots, and the whole hill-side is covered with them.

However much, said Mr. Webster, we may regret the excess to which the Chinese carry this sentiment, it is in itself highly commendable. It is the source of many virtues, and is commended to us with higher authority and more awful sanctions than it is to them, for from among the thunderings and lightnings of Mount Sinai came forth the commandment, "Honor thy father and thy mother," &c.

The American embassy arrived at Macao in February, and the months of March, April and May, said Mr. W., we passed in studying the language and waiting as contentedly as we could intelligence from Keying, who was to meet us. At last we received a letter from him, 1500 miles to the West, saying that he was on his way, had been detained by want of water in the canals, and would be there in five minutes. We waited as patiently as possible in a city without society, walks, drivers or anything in the slightest degree amusing; and his five minutes proved to be, according to our division of time, twenty days. At last he reached Canton, and finally a messenger announced that he was at Macao, and had taken up his lodgings at a great temple a mile and a half out of town. He announced his intention of calling upon us the following day at 11 o'clock precisely.

The Chinese are very particular in all matters of etiquette. Their visiting cards, which no Chinese gentleman can be without, instead of being such small bits of pasteboard as are used by us, are large sheets of red paper. The Chinese always use envelopes of all sizes, from a pillow case to a purse; always employ sealing wax; and inscribe upon the outside of their letters the names of both writer and person addressed. The two are placed, with their titles, in parallel columns, running from bottom to top, and the rank of the person corresponds with the length of space occupied by his name.

Upon one occasion a letter was sent to the American Minister by Keying, the names inscribed on which were not equal. It was therefore not received, and on the explanation being made, the error was carefully corrected, and I thought, said Mr. Webster, that I observed afterwards a delicate attention on the part of Keying which was very pleasing. His name being much longer than Mr. Cushing's there was some difficulty in making them correspond in length upon the letter. This was done by writing his own name in very small characters and Mr. Cushing's in large—large enough for a guide post.

About half an hour before the appearance of the high commissioner and suite, a messenger brought a card and immediately preceding them a second messenger brought another. Keying then appeared, and with him were Wang, Chang, Too Ling, &c. &c. Of Wang, the lieutenant governor of the two Kwang provinces, Mr. Webster said that he was, without any exaggeration or qualification, a gentleman of as polished manners, of as courteous and easy address as any to be met in the drawing rooms of Europe or the United States. He was remarkably handsome, finely formed and had the smallest and most delicate hands he had ever seen upon a man. Chang was the scholar—a plain man, with a broad, sour face, and spectacles with glasses as large as a dollar, set in black horn rings. Too Ling was a little subdued now that he was in the presence of Keying. When the high commissioner drew near, three guns were fired, the mariners drew up in the hall and presented arms to receive him. Keying is 60 years old—tall, large and dignified. His face expresses talent and decision.—He is one of the most able and influential men in an empire of three hundred millions. After a little conversation a collation was provided and the guests retired,

without having named the object of the mission. The American embassy returned the visit next day, and after being received with the unvarying salute of three guns, were ushered into an inner room to dine. As a specimen of a Chinese dinner Mr. Webster described that given by Keying to the American legation on the conclusion and signature of the treaty, the third of July, 1844. Eight copies of the treaty had to be prepared, four in English and four in Chinese, and though the Americans worked hard the Chinese had theirs finished first. The Americans got theirs written out by 8 o'clock P. M., and it being late, proceeded at once to Keying's residence. The room was small, twenty by ten, without windows, and having only the door by which they entered. At the farther end a small table stood upon a platform; and on this the two ministers seated themselves, the rest of the company taking seats along the sides of the room. It was excessively hot, and though tolerable to the thinly dressed Chinese, was to the Americans almost insufferable. The treaty was read, the copies were compared, and the seals affixed, when two Tartars entered bearing a package in yellow cloth, which proved to be the Imperial seal. This was stamped upon the document and then the dinner commenced.

The Chinese, continued Mr. Webster, insisted that we should take off our coats; we had taken care to provide ourselves with white jackets, except one gentleman, who was positively obliged to sit at this great diplomatic dinner, given on the conclusion of a treaty between two great nations, in his shirt sleeves! The table was set for twenty, and covered with bananas, mangoes, oranges and other fruits, sweetmeats, etc. A hot drink, like poor whiskey, called 'sanehou', was prepared, each having a small teapot containing it by his side. We were required to fill a small cup, take it up with both hands, half rise, nod to the friend whom we wished to compliment, and then empty the cup, taking care to turn the inside toward him that he might be assured it was empty. This done according to the custom, we were helped to fruits, Keying, with his own chop-sticks, seized a fig and put it on the Minister's plate. This over, a pudding was introduced, expressly invented for the occasion, by Keying himself. It was excellent and spoke volumes for the gastronomic talents of the high commissioner. When this course was removed, two dishes of meat were brought on by attendants, who were very numerous and very well drilled.—Keying again helped our Minister to a dish of chicken and pork, like a stew; and the dish was then passed round to the other guests. Then cups of *sanehou* were taken. The dishes were then set in the centre of the table; the same process was rapidly repeated until a hundred dishes, in silver vessels, filled the table from one end to the other.

Bread was brought in compliment to the strangers, and then came side dishes, served as vegetables are served with us, of lotus flower seed, roasted water melon seeds, sharks fins, the roofs of the mouths of hogs, sea weeds, deer sinews, *biche de mer*, a large sea slug, six or eight inches by one, found on the flats of the tropical islands, and edible birds' nests. These are of a gelatinous substance, supposed to be collected by swallows upon rocks from the foam of the sea. They are perfect nests, and require to be cleansed of feathers, dirt, &c., and are by no means disagreeable, being somewhat between vermicelli and tapioca, stringy like the one, transparent like the other, and quite tasteless.

When purified they are worth their weight in silver. These things would certainly be thought no great addition to our festive boards. They are costly, however, and can only be afforded by the rich. The custom of taking up morsels and trusting them into the mouths of their friends, said the lecturer, which prevails at the Chinese tables, reminds one forcibly of the adjuration of Meg Merrilies to Dominic Sampson, "Gape sinner, and swallow!"

The Tartar addition to the dinner, brought in by six cooks with great ceremony, consisted of roast mutton, turkey, boiled ham and buffalo hump, and a whole roasted pig, lacquered and gilt all over. These were set down behind the chairs, and then each cook, drawing from his girdle a long, sharp knife, carved the meat into thin slices, which were received on plates by the attendants and handed to the guests. A large bowl of very nice soup was then brought in. Keying took it up with both hands, drank out of it, and then passed it to the minister; and then it went the round of the whole table.—Thus at dinner we spent the time from 9 to 1 o'clock—the whole order of a European dinner being exactly reversed—beginning with fruit and ending with soup. The company rose from the table, put on their coats and took their leave. The band struck up, three guns were fired, and they returned to Macao, ready to exclaim with Macbeth—"We have supped full of horrors."

Mr. Webster then remarked upon the dress of the Chinese, which, though not so graceful as the Turkish or the Roman, seemed to him at all events far more so than our own. The mandarins wore long robes of rich and heavy silk, embroidered with gold, and covered by a splendid riding coat. A girdle passes around the waist, fastened with a buckle of precious stones, and long boots, whitened, reach the knees. Around the neck is a string of beads, of stones in winter and of perfumed wood in summer. A cap of delicate straw or velvet is worn. A precious stone forms the button and a pearl is fastened in front.

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They are remarkably fond of substituting one thing for another which they imagine to bear any resemblance. Thus small feet are called golden lilies. Butterflies and the moon are emblems of love and wooers; thus, a fair one, *See-so-sli*, says in a novel, "I will drop the screen to shield me from the influence of the moon and prevent the butterflies from entering into my chamber." To them such changes are doubtless beautiful.

Another specimen of a different kind. "The Imperial troops put the enemy to flight; 500,000 of the enemy lay dead on the field in the morning; blood flowed from the hills as a stream, and mustering the Imperial troops, which had dispersed in pursuit, they immediately commenced cooking, for they were very hungry." Another. A youth exchanges vows with a maiden, but his relentless sire requires him to marry some other golden lily.

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But they have also writings of a higher character, as the works of Confucius, which are among the noblest specimens of moral teaching ever written. The art of printing was known in China long before it was discovered in the Western world; books are very cheap and universally diffused; the compass was used, manufactures of various kinds were carried on, canals made, and in short all mechanical powers, except steam, were known in China long before they were invented in the West. Paper money had been used and discarded long before bills of exchange were known to the Jews, and now the only coin employed in the immense trade of the Empire is a copper coin worth about one-tenth of a cent.

Mr. Webster concluded with remarks at great length on the antiquity of the Chinese nation, as shown by the patriarchal of the Chinese Government, which is entirely primitive, and such as obtained in the earliest ages of the world, and which, for its preservation, requires a homogeneous people, an early origin and an unbroken history; and by the character of their language, which is hieroglyphic.

The language, he said, embraces 80,000 characters, and is exceedingly difficult to learn. It has 200 radicals and 800 primitives. The name Roscommon would be written with the signs for a rose, a cow and a man. This extraordinary people claim to have unbroken traditions running back 2,953 years before Christ, or within 1,200 years of the creation of the world, and Mr. W. thought it not at all unlikely that at that time they may have had a regular government, a monarch, a large population, and institutions very much as they are found now.

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Mr. Webster then remarked upon the dress of the Chinese, which, though not so graceful as the Turkish or the Roman, seemed to him at all events far more so than our own. The mandarins wore long robes of rich and heavy silk, embroidered with gold, and covered by a splendid riding coat. A girdle passes around the waist, fastened with a buckle of precious stones, and long boots, whitened, reach the knees. Around the neck is a string of beads, of stones in winter and of perfumed wood in summer. A cap of delicate straw or velvet is worn. A precious stone forms the button and a pearl is fastened in front.

The richest costumes they saw were worn by players, on the stage. Keying and his suite were dressed in the plainest manner, having no ornament except the button and the peacock's feather. The Chinese actors are always itinerant, and are hired by private persons, or by several, who contribute to raise a fund for the purpose. They have no changing of scenes, and everything is very rude and to us uninteresting. And yet they had played at Macao three days and nights without intermission, many persons standing twenty-four to look on, receiving refreshments from persons who have to sell. No women appear, and all speak in falsetto. Their dramas seem to be historical, abounding in exaggerations and absurdities, and their comedies are vulgar disgusting. They have an extensive literature—their poetry abounds in tropes and figures, and is sometimes touching and beautiful.

MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, DECEMBER, 1845.

Fellow-citizens of the Senate
and House of Representatives:

It is to me a source of unaffected satisfaction to meet the Representatives of the States and the People in Congress assembled, as it will be to receive the aid of their combined wisdom in the administration of public affairs. In performing, for the first time, the duty imposed on me by the Constitution, of giving to you information of the state of the Union, and recommending to your consideration such measures as in my judgment are necessary and expedient, I am happy that I can congratulate you on the continued prosperity of our country. Under the blessings of Divine Providence and the benign influence of our free institutions, it stands before the world a spectacle of national happiness.

With our unexampled advancement in all the elements of national greatness, the affection of the people is confirmed for the Union of the States, and for the doctrines of popular liberty, which lie at the foundation of our Government.

It becomes us in humility, to make our devout acknowledgments to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe for the inestimable civil and religious blessings with which we are favored.

In calling the attention of Congress to our relations with foreign Powers, I am gratified to be able to state, that, though with some of them there have existed since your last session serious causes of irritation and misunderstanding, yet no actual hostilities have taken place. Adopting the maxim in the conduct of our foreign affairs, to "ask nothing that is not right, and submit to nothing that is wrong," it has been my anxious desire to preserve peace with all nations; but, at the same time, to be prepared to resist aggression, and to maintain all our just rights.

In pursuance of the joint resolution of Congress "for annexing Texas to the United States," my predecessor, on the third day of March, 1845, elected to submit the first and second sections of that resolution to the Republic of Texas, as an overture, on the part of the United States for her admission as a State into our Union. This election I approved, and accordingly the Charge d'Affaires of the United States in Texas, under instructions of the tenth of March, 1845, presented these sections of the resolution for the acceptance of that Republic. The Executive Government, the Congress, and the People of Texas in Convention, have successively complied with all the terms and conditions of the joint resolution. A Constitution for the government of the State of Texas, formed by a convention of deputies, is herewith laid before Congress. It is well known, also, that the people of Texas at the polls have accepted the terms of annexation, and ratified the Constitution.

I communicate to Congress the correspondence between the Secretary of State and our Charge d'Affaires in Texas; and also the correspondence of the latter with the authorities of Texas; together with the official documents transmitted by him to his own Government.

The terms of annexation which were offered by the United States having been accepted by Texas, the public faith of both parties is solemnly pledged to the compact of their union. Nothing remains to consummate the event, but the passage of an act by Congress to admit the State of Texas into the Union upon an equal footing with the original States. Strong reasons exist why this should be done at an early period of the session. It will be observed that, by the constitution of Texas, the existing government is only continued temporarily till Congress can act; and that the third Monday of the present month is the day appointed for holding the first general election. On that day a governor, a lieutenant governor, and both branches of the legislature, will be chosen by the people. The President of Texas is required, immediately after the receipt of official information that the new State has been admitted into our Union by Congress, to convene the legislature; and upon its meeting, the existing government will be superseded, and the State government organized. Questions deeply interesting to Texas, in common with the other States; the extension of our revenue laws and judicial system over her people and territory, as well as measures of a local character, will claim the early attention of Congress; and, therefore, upon every principle of republican government, she ought to be represented in that body without unnecessary delay. I cannot too earnestly recommend prompt action on this important subject.

As soon as the act to admit Texas as a State shall be passed, the union of the two republics will be consummated by their own voluntary consent.

This accession to our territory has been a bloodless achievement. No arm of force has been raised to produce the result. The sword has had no part in the victory. We have not sought to extend our territorial possessions by conquest, or our republican institutions over a reluctant people. It was the deliberate homage of each people to the great principle of our federative union.

If we consider the extent of territory involved in the annexation—its prospective influence on America—the means by which it has been accomplished, springing purely from the choice of the people themselves to share the blessings of our union,—the history of the world may be challenged to furnish a parallel.

The jurisdiction of the United States, which at the formation of the federal constitution was bounded by the St. Mary's, on the Atlantic, has passed the Capes of Florida, and been peacefully extended to the Del Norte. In contemplating the grandeur of this event, it is not to be forgotten that the result was achieved in despite of

The "Washington Constitution" is to be removed to Baltimore. Of course, now the Editors of the Union will become printers for both branches of Congress. Next to Messrs. Blair and Rives, the Constitution was the most formidable conjectured rival of the Union.—Messrs. Blair and Rives not being candidates, and the Constitution retiring from the field, the Union of course takes the whole loaf, or rather the whole of the two very large loaves to be disposed of by the two Houses. One of the Editors of that paper has certainly stronger claims than any other among the names spoken of.