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The Chinese Educational Mission for more than two years has been very quietly and very earnestly putting in operation in New England the initiatory movements of a measure destined to affect materially the future of the oldest, most populous, and most conservative nation in the world. So modestly, in fact, has this Mission taken its place in our land, and commenced its important work, that very few besides those immediately interested and engaged in it, know why so many young Chinese boys are to be found in the towns of the Connecticut Valley. The only general information in regard to these strange visitors is comprised in the apparent fact that they are here to be educated. Let us see what it means.

China has always been the hermit of nations. Until the present generation, indeed, her ports were not open to international commerce, and the whole vast realm, with its busy hundreds of millions of souls, was an unknown land, with a Cerberus at every portal. The combined powers of the world, led by intrepid America, succeeded, at length, in opening her ports to commerce, and bringing her into diplomatic relations with other lands. But though this marked an era in the monotonous story of that nation's life, it was still only a business transaction. The national traditions, grounded in forty centuries of conservatism, were not to be uprooted in this way. Another instrumentality was called into play before the soil was prepared for the better growths of other countries. A Chinese boy, then a sojourner in a strange land, having abjured the religion of his people, and at home but little better than an outcast, was to be the means, in God's providence, of opening the door of a new and broader national life for his countrymen.

Thirty or forty years ago some American missionaries, who had obtained a footing in Macao, an island on the China coast, gave instructions in English to a young Chinese boy entrusted to their care. So devoted did the young student become to his

instructor, that when the latter returned to Massachusetts, Yung Wing, then sixteen years of age, was one of three Chinese lads who accompanied him. The broader facilities which he here found, the young student grasped with an unwavering purpose. Still boarding in the family of Rev. L. R. Brown, of Springfield, Mass., his missionary teacher, he pursued a course of study in Monson Academy, and while there was led to espouse the Christian religion. In 1850, he entered Yale College, where he graduated with distinction, four years later. His student life completed, it became an important question with the young man how to utilize the knowledge he had acquired. Naturally his American friends had hoped to see him enter the field as a missionary preacher, and their influence was exerted in that direction, but Yung Wing decided not to become a missionary. Longing to make his experiences of the greatest possible service to the whole race of his countrymen, he had already begun to dream of a great mission for himself in the educational field. How the desired result was to be brought about not even his yearning soul could imagine.

Few young men in the world's history ever found themselves the champion of a great reformatory idea under greater discouragements than those which Yung Wing encountered on his return to China. The very decision he had made had cut him off from the sectarian charities that would have helped him to become a preacher to his people, and his college course had been completed under all the discouragements of poverty. But Yung Wing's ardent patriotism never wavered. He turned his back upon every temptation to forego the purpose of his heart, and soon after leaving Yale set sail for China. Here he was utterly without friends, and a stranger in his own land. While achieving such success in the study of our language, he had forgotten his own, and could neither write nor speak it so as to make himself understood. There was no one to welcome him. By his own people he was regarded with a prejudice which almost excluded him from their society; while his refusal to become a formal missionary acted strongly to his disadvantage with the foreigners there resident, who somewhat naturally considered him a sort of hopeless convert after all.

Ten years passed, and though he had made every possible effort to secure some position which would bring him into connection with the officials of his country, he seemed no nearer to the realization of his ambition. But, though he had now reached middle life, with no prospect of being able to accomplish his heart's aspiration, Yung Wing never for a moment wavered in his design, or lessened his efforts to bring his plans to the notice of the Government.

In 1862, there came a gleam of light. In that year, Tsang Koh Fan, the General commanding the Imperial troops operating

against the rebels, after an interview with Yung Wing, who was then established in business in the interior, engaged his services for the Government, and made him a mandarin of the fifth rank. His first recommendation was for the establishment of a factory for the manufacture of arms, which should be supplied with the best machinery to be had in the world. The recommendation was at once acted upon, and Yung Wing was given the amount of money named as necessary, with an eighteen months' leave of absence, to procure the material wherever he saw fit. He visited America, England, and France, but bought all his machinery here, and on his return to China was made a mandarin of the fourth rank.

Then came another period of waiting. Yung Wing had never forgotten his educational project, and had often taken opportunity to urge its importance upon his friends; but while he made many converts to his ideas, he was invariably given to understand that it was not yet time to bring the project before the higher authorities—that he must wait till prejudice softened, if it ever should soften; and the patient patriot waited on. But he was not waiting in vain. The Tientsin massacre of 1869 is still fresh in memory, and this it was that indirectly brought about the success of Mr. Wing's long cherished plan. The French Catholic missionaries were murdered by a mob, and for a time great alarm was felt lest all foreigners might be treated in the same manner. The foreign officials demanded indemnity, and a guarantee for the future. Committees were appointed from both sides, and Yung Wing was among the Chinese representatives. The services he rendered were so marked as to secure him especial recognition. He now took the opportunity to impress, more earnestly than ever, upon the officials with whom he came in contact the absolute national necessity of having representative men educated in foreign thought and ideas, as well as in language, so that China should be prepared to meet the new responsibilities which its enlarged commercial policy required, without being obliged, as in the instance of Mr. Burlingame, to obtain the services of foreigners to represent it. It was a strong argument addressed to the national pride, and we may well suppose it was pressed with all his powers of reasoning, for such an opportunity he might never see again. And this time the plea was not in vain. In due time the imperial decree was issued, the necessary money appropriated, and the commission appointed.

The commissioners were Yung Wing, now made a mandarin of the third rank, Chin Lan Pin, and Chan Laisun, the secretary of the Board. The latter, like Yung Wing, was educated in America. In boyhood he came to this country, and for some years lived at Bloomfield, N. J. He graduated at Hamilton College, Clinton, N. Y., and, after returning to his native land, won distinction as a

teacher of Chinese youth, entering heartily into the educational plan. Like Yung Wing, Mr. Laisun is a convert to Christianity, and several of his family are now members of the First Congregational Church at Springfield.

The third commissioner, Chin Lan Pin, who lately returned to China to attend to the interests of the Mission there, might very properly be termed the conservative element of the Board. His associates were Christians, and to a great extent Americanized. He remained true to his people in religion, in thought, in custom. While appreciating the advantages that would result to his country from the proposed new departure in education, he was inclined to fear, with many of his fellow Celestials, that the long sojourn of their youth in a foreign land would result in a loss of those national peculiarities which are so dear to the Chinese heart. And Mr. Wing and Mr. Laisun may well respect the conscientious conservatism of their associate. While they have no fears of any such "demoralization" of their pupils, and would, at heart, no doubt, welcome their conversion to Christianity, there would seem to be glory enough for one lifetime in their present success.

The details of the Mission were placed entirely in the hands of Mr. Wing. The imperial decree merely designated that one hundred and twenty Chinese boys should be sent to the Western countries for education from early boyhood to mature manhood. It was quite in the natural order of things that Yung Wing should lead his important charge back to the scenes that had been familiar to his own early manhood.

The matter, having once been decided upon, was carried out with the national thoroughness. Four years were given to the selection of the pupils, in order that the most brilliant and promising sons of the empire should be secured. Scholarship was made the only test, and while many of the fortunate ones are the sons of wealthy and influential parents, the children of the humblest mechanic are by no means debarred. Each year an installment of thirty has been sent to this country, and the coming season will witness the filling of the complement.

The proposed course of education is to be distinctively Chinese in its thoroughness and completeness. There is to be nothing of American haste or superficiality about it. Fifteen years is the contemplated period of sojourn, and though this limit may be shortened in individual cases, it is likely that the large majority of our Celestial pupils will remain the full time. Nor do those pupils who have already commenced their course manifest any desire for a shortening of the time. Patience is peculiarly a Chinese trait. No matter what task may be assigned them, it is undertaken with an application which knows no faltering or discouragement. In fact, Chinese boys appear to have no conception of the difference

between hard and easy tasks; whatever is given them is undertaken with their whole strength of mind. Their success with English studies is remarkable. Some of those who began their studies but little more than two years ago, under the tutorship of Rev. M. C. Stebbins, late Principal of the Springfield High School, are now studying advanced algebra and Latin, with corresponding progress in other branches. The fine arts do not escape their attention, and in drawing they make very marked progress. One of the pupils of Mr. Stebbins, Chun Lung, had evinced such talent for portraiture, that when the commissioners last visited him they were so pleased with specimens of his skill, that they sat to him for their own pictures.

In reading and spelling they are very proficient, and speak our language with a good degree of fluency; they are sometimes puzzled by our idioms, which, independent of the fact that our language is so "fearfully and wonderfully made," will hardly be surprising, when it is remembered that there is not a line of resemblance between the two languages, the Chinese having neither case, gender, number, mood, nor tense.

The students are distributed through all the towns on the Connecticut River between Springfield and Hartford, and in that vicinity, with families of culture, two in a family; as a rule, only two are apportioned to the same town. They become very much attached to their associates in many cases, and some interesting incidents are related in that condition. A case illustrative was that of one whose father, a prosperous merchant in the Sandwich Islands, desired his son to give up his student's life and join him in business. But the boy's heart rebelled, and, as he was progressing wonderfully with his studies, the commissioners and his tutor joined in urging that the boy be allowed to remain in the Mission, and the father finally withdrew his request. As soon as the work of preparation is completed the boys will enter the different colleges selected.

Such is an imperfect sketch of one of the greatest educational movements of the age, indeed of all history. Its importance to the future of China no one can estimate.