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Professor R. K. DOUGLAS read a paper on "The Social and Religious Ideas of the Chinese, as illustrated in the Ideographic Characters of the Language."

Dr. E. B. TYLOR, Mr. R. H. PYE, and Mr. A. L. LEWIS joined in the discussion, and the Author replied.

Mr. JOSEPH OFFORD, jun., read a paper on "The Mythology and Psychology of the Ancient Egyptians."

The SOCIAL *and* RELIGIOUS IDEAS *of the* CHINESE, *as* ILLUSTRATED *in the* IDEOGRAPHIC CHARACTERS *of the* LANGUAGE.

By Professor R. K. DOUGLAS, M.A.

[Read 26th April, 1892.]

The Chinese as Painted in their Ideographic Characters.

IN addressing this Society on the ideographic characters of the Chinese, it is hardly necessary that I should call to mind the fact that the first form of written character known to the Chinese was, as was the case with the Egyptians and other peoples of antiquity, that of hieroglyphics. Unlike the Egyptians, however, who advanced through the various stages of hieroglyphics, ideographs, and phonetics, to syllabic and alphabetical writing, the Chinese stopped short at the phonetic stage. They are, if I may use the expression, an immature people, and just as their eyes are infants' eyes, so far as the absence of the caruncula lachrymalis and the heavy fold of the upper lid are concerned, and their cheeks, the smooth cheeks of young boys, so their written characters represent an arrested stage in the mental development of the people.

When we first hear of the Chinese in China, we find them in possession of the three forms of the character which I have mentioned, and beyond these they have not advanced. If it were not proved beyond cavil that the Chinese were emigrants from a centre of civilisation in Western Asia the one fact that no inscription in the hieroglyphic character is known to exist

in China would point to the conclusion that, at all events, their writing had passed out of the purely hieroglyphic stage before they reached their present habitat. Indeed, the hieroglyphics which are found in the writing, bear traces of having been modified and restored from characters which had lost their original forms. The tendency towards hieroglyphics has always been present in the Chinese mind, and in the early reform of writing there was exhibited an inclination to recognise pictures of objects in characters which had virtually ceased to be hieroglyphics, and to reconstruct them in that earlier form.

As was natural, the objects of Nature were those which formed the earliest hieroglyphics. The sun and the heavenly bodies generally, the physical features of the earth, man and the beasts which walk on it, birds which fly above it, and fishes which swim beneath it; all found pictorial expression on paper. A number of these are still preserved in the writing, as for example

Jih, the Sun. Yueh, the Moon. Shan, a Mountain. Muh, the Eye.

But it is obvious that these must soon have been found insufficient for the wants of a people who like the Chinese developed at an early period a taste for literature. For the expression of an idea something more was wanted than the drawing of an object, and so they invented a class of compound symbols composed of two or more hieroglyphics to serve as ideographs. For example to express the idea of "brightness" (明) they combined "the sun" (日), and "the moon" (月). Later again when they found that a still more extended system was necessary they, like the Egyptians, adopted certain characters as phonetics, and used them to express sounds only, quite irrespective of either their hieroglyphic or ideographic values, although in many instances it is easy to recognise ideographic values in a number of characters which are commonly classed as phonetics. For example we have the word *Ching* 京 meaning "great," "exalted," "the capital," &c., and it is easy to imagine how this word would be applied to large and eminent objects. Thus brilliant sunlight was called Ching, a whale was called Ching, and great strength was called Ching. But it was obviously necessary to differentiate on paper, the characters by which these words were represented and so they wrote 日 the sun above 京 for "brilliant sunshine", put a fish 魚 at the side of 京 for a "whale" or great fish, and combined strength with 京 to express "great strength."

In some few instances again under the influence of Buddhist

writers they spelt the words in accordance with the system imported into China from India to express proper names—that is to say, in order to indicate a desired word they chose two symbols, the first of which supplied the initial sound, and the second the final sound. Thus they wrote the word 娘, Niang, by the amalgamation of the two symbols Nü (女) and liang (良) = (娘) Niang.

But though the formation of the Chinese hieroglyphics and phonetics is doubtless of great linguistic moment, there is in the ideographs an additional element of interest which is worthy of attention. In them we have mirrored before the eye the ideas of their inventors on every subject known to them. The qualifications of a ruler, the constituent elements of a nation, as well as the religious, social and scientific notions of the people are so pictured and delineated that he who runs can read when once the key to the decipherment of this form of the writing is applied to it. With the light thus thrown upon them, the symbols which at first sight seem so complicated and unintelligible become living and lively records of the nation's history, and supply a truer and more certain index of the national characteristics than can often be obtained by a knowledge of the people themselves.

These ideographs are to the eye what our compound words are to the understanding. They place on record the views of their inventors, as words reflect the ideas of those who coin them; and like words they have been invented as the occasions for their existence have arisen. Like words also they owe their acceptance to the recognition of the aptness with which they represent the required ideas. We all know instances of words which have been launched into the world with authority, and which have never passed into circulation, and again words which have won their way into universal use by their fitness for the ideas desired. In the same way we may assume that when ideographic characters have been fully accepted by the people, they have justified their existence by the propriety of their composition. As I shall have occasion to point out, a number of these characters have in their present shapes deviated from the original forms which are preserved in the dictionaries of the Archaic characters. But this strengthens the idea that the newer forms represented the prevailing ideas of the people more accurately than the ancient shapes did, since so conservatively-minded a people as the Chinese would only adopt a change in their writing which approved itself to their understandings.

The characters which I shall quote this evening are all of respectable antiquity—that is to say, there are none of later

adoption than the early centuries of our era, and many have their origins many hundreds of years before Christ. Many of them are explained by the native etymologists in the sense in which I am about to lay them before you. To some, however, it is necessary to give the explanation which their forms plainly suggest, since the Chinese seem to be incapable of realising the fact that in past ages other states of society existed than that now known to them, and also since their pride forbids them to associate the formation of their characters with anything related to any other people than themselves. In literature an illustration of the first of these remarks is furnished by the case of the *Yih king* or "Book of Changes," the earliest book of the Chinese which has been a perennial puzzle to every generation of native scholars who have attempted to explain it from their existing standpoints, and the true meaning of which has been revealed by Professor De Lacouperie, who has discovered in its pages traces of syllabaries such as are found in ancient Accadian syllabaries, many of which doubtless came into the possession of the Chinese before their advent into China. As an example of their disinclination to recognise references to non-Chinese people in their characters, I may point to the character for iron, a metal which, as the same scholar has recently shown, was originally brought to the knowledge of the Chinese by native tribes, and which was consequently represented on paper by a character signifying "Barbarian," "metal," 夷 金 = 鐵.

If then we take, for example, the character or symbol used to represent the emperor, we find that it is a compound of two parts meaning "self" (自), and "ruler," (王), and thus signifies "ruler of one's self." This primary qualification of the Emperor is in accordance with the generally conceived idea which was first formulated by Confucius that before a man can rule a state he must be able to rule a district; before he can rule a district he must be able to rule his family; and before he can rule his family he must be master of himself. By a clerical error in the character now in use, oneself (自), has been converted into "white" (白), and the symbol in its present form means "white ruler." This symbol 白 which it will be observed differs only from 日 "the sun," by the stroke above it, is, as has been pointed out by Mr. Ball, a relic of the old Accadian writing of Chaldæa, in which script the same character is used for both "sun" and "white," the first being pronounced *Ud* or *Ut*, and the second *Bar*, *Barbar*. The Chinese have preserved these sounds in *Jit* anciently *Nit*, and *Pai*, anciently *Pak*, *Bak*, for the two words, and have differentiated the characters by the stroke referred to.

The kingdom over which a "ruler of himself" should hold sway is one which must have a well defined frontier and must at all times be prepared to resist its foes. These were plainly the ideas of the inventors of the character for "kingdom" (國), which is made up of 口, a frontier, 口 "men," lit. "mouths," and 戈, "weapons," and which has reference to a time before the firm establishment of the empire, when there were fightings within and without, and when it was only by his strength in the field and the metal of his weapons that the sovereign held his own against his enemies. The 口 "frontier" is used for smaller enclosures, and so we have 禾, "grain" in an enclosure *ch'iun* 囷, to mean a granary, or "a pig" (豕) in the same position to mean "a pigsty," *hwan* 圂

If we knew nothing of the domestic architecture of the Chinese we should expect to find from the character for a house (宀), that on entering the front door we should be landed in a courtyard; for it shows us that within the 戶, "door," is a 方, or "square space." This exactly represents the style in which every house in China of any pretensions is built. On passing through the doorway one steps into a courtyard, and if the owner be a man of wealth the probability is that there will be one more courtyard at least before that enclosure is reached which is devoted to ladies of his household. This last arcane retreat is depicted on paper by a 圭 "sceptre," standing at a 門 "folding door" (閨), and emblematises the authority which forbids all to enter but the holder of the rod of power. It is characteristic of the ancient civilisation of China that houses or parts of houses enter so largely into the ideographic writing. The door is very commonly so used. An ancient hieroglyphic was that shown above in the compound symbol for house, and which shows us a single door. At possibly a later time folding doors came into use and the hieroglyphic (門), superseded in common usage the more ancient form, 戶. A Chinese folding door is commonly composed of open latticework in the upper portions, and of solid wood beneath. The first part of this description is depicted in the character, the rest being left to the imagination, or it may be that in the first instance there were more screens than doors, a space being left beneath for the passage of the smaller animals.

The position of a servant or other person asking a question would appropriately be at the folding door, and so the Chinese represent the verb "to enquire" by a mouth (口) in the doorway (問). A less appropriate position for a listener is at the same opening. But in China, as elsewhere, eavesdropping is one of the commonest forms of listening, and recognising the fact, the inventors of writing adopted an ear (耳), at the opening of

the door as a fitting symbol for "to hear" (聞). In the same way the chink in the folding door is made obvious by the rays of the sun shining through it, and therefore the sun (日), in the doorway is accepted as a descriptive symbol for "a crevice" (間); while "a heart" (心), confined within a doorway (悶), symbolises the melancholy of seclusion.

In the character, 閏 *Jun* "an Intercalary Month," we have preserved the record of an ancient and interesting custom. In ancient times it was provided that during the intercalary months any person who had a wrong to complain of might have free access to the sovereign, and in order to make the ruler more easily accessible, it was customary for him to sit in the gateway of the palace where he received the petitions of his aggrieved subjects. Hence the adoption of this compound which is made up of 王, a king at a gateway to signify the month when the king sits in the gate.

"A roof" (宀) is also a common component part of ideograms. The idea of "rest" or "quiet" is exemplified by "a woman" (女) under her domestic roof (安). It was a saying reverenced among the Chinese that a woman should never be heard of beyond her home, and as this idea is still preserved the symbol is singularly appropriate—at least in China where women are yet in much the same untutored state as that enjoyed by Turkish ladies when Byron wrote:—

> "No chemistry for them unfolds its gases;
> No metaphysics are let loose in lectures;
> No circulating library amasses
> Religious novels, moral tales and strictures
> Upon the living manners as they pass us;
> No exhibition glares with annual pictures
> They stare not on the stars from out their attics,
> Nor deal (thank God for that!) in mathematics."

In lands further west where the platform and class rooms are the chosen fields of female enterprise, some other symbol, if required, would have to be invented; as in such circumstances the character in question might readily be understood to mean "a rare occasion." One of the earliest characters for a house was one composed of "to arrive at" (至) "a roof" (室). At a later period a character was adopted which bears traces rather of life among the non-Chinese tribes of China than of the Celestials themselves. On the borders of Yunnan and Tibet the Lolos and Kachyens more often than not share their homes with their pigs, cattle and poultry. It is to this style of living that the character for "a household" now in use seem to point, composed as it is of "a pig," *shi* (豕) under a roof (家), a character which the etymologists tell us was originally written with three men instead of the pig.

But the centre of every household is the family altar, which being the supreme domestic authority is very suitably used to represent "a lord" or "master" (主). This, we are told by the native authorities, represents a candlestick with the flame of the candle; its meaning and shape, however, both seem to indicate that it is rather intended for an altar. It is round the altar that the family congregate and so "a man" (亻) standing by it (住) is the symbol chosen to express the verb "to dwell." Some idea of the estimate in which men are regarded may be gathered from the part played in compound characters by the symbol for man (亻), in composition. We learn from it that his word should be as good as his bond, since a man's words (信), are the equivalent of "sincerity" and "truth." Etiquette also which so largely enters into the life of Chinamen finds it expression on paper in a compound made up of "man" (亻) and "right" (義), that is "that which is right and proper for man" (義). A man's (亻) sceptre (圭) is that which is "beautiful," "superior," and "excellent" (佳), while many of the characters in which the symbol for "man" appears are truthfully descriptive of his conditions and occupations. "A man" (亻) combined with "spring-time" (春) appropriately suggests "one in the enjoyment of early life" (㑹春); while "an estate," *yeh* (㚔) "man" (亻) can be none other than "a vassal" *Puh* (僕). Benevolence (仁), or the exercise of humanity between man and man is represented by two (二) men (亻). On the principle also that happiness is born a twin; a "companion" (伴) is half (半) a man, (亻) and "to aid," "to help" (佑) is a man (亻) on the right hand (右).

The Chinese estimate of women as drawn in their writing is not complimentary. Following in the footsteps of their philosophers Chinamen have learnt to regard women with some disdain and in ignorance of the good that is in them to credit them with much that is evil. The character now in use for woman (女) is a corruption of the Accadian hieroglyph meaning the same thing. When we have two women together (奻) *Nan*, the compound is intended to convey the meaning of "to wrangle," an idea which occasionally enters into occidental as well as oriental life. As an instance of this I might quote a story told me by a barrister, who said that when he took his chambers the porter of the inn asked that his wife might be engaged as his laundress. "All the gentlemen on the staircase employ my wife," he added, "and if you were to bring in another woman, I would not answer for the consequences." The addition of a third woman *kien* (姦) makes the symbol for "to intrigue," and in confirmation of the idea conveyed by these characters, we find the compound composed of (女), "women," (㚒) "together," means "to suspect," "to dislike," "to loath."

"Women" in company with "four hands" (姦) are very suggestive of the "noise of strife and scolding" (嬲) *choh*, as well as of a more actively combative action; while a woman at the foot of two trees, *lan* (婪) stands for "desire" and "greedy"—a combination which reminds us of the unfortunate failing of the mother of us all.

Certain inventors of writing who had less jaundiced ideas on the subject of women than others thought that a "natural" (婧) "woman" might well stand for "propriety exhibited in a retiring demeanour." A less complimentary sense is conveyed by the character for "disobedient" (婼) which is composed of "after the manner of" (若) "a woman" (女).

But though the Chinese contemn the weaker sex they have preserved in their writing a record of the time when women were rulers, and when, as is still the case in parts of Tibet and Mongolia, it was in them and not in the man that the people recognised the authors of their being. "A clan" or "family" (姓) is that which is "born" (生) of "a woman" (女). In the earliest form this character was composed of *muh*, an eye, and *sheng*, to be born. Later the character of *mu*, mother, was substituted for the eye, and the compound character read, born of a mother, and later still the present form was adopted.

In common conversation, with that curious habit of naming things indirectly which is so marked a characteristic of the Chinese, a man frequently speaks of his wife as "my basket and broom," and this idea occurs in the usual compound for a wife (婦) which shows us a woman and "a besom," *chou*, 帚. When a man marries *ch'ü* (娶) he is said "to take" "the woman" (女) by "the ear" (耳) after the manner, described in the ancient *chow li* or chow ritual, of either bringing in the left ears of prisoners captured in war or, as was undoubtedly practised, of bringing them in by the left ear, and thus preserves an interesting record of the primitive custom of marriage by capture. The native lexicographers tell us that this character was originally written without the woman, and meant therefore only "to take the ear," "take by the ear," which is still the common character for "to take." When, however, it was intended to mean to take a woman in marriage, the character for woman was added for the sake of distinctness. It is interesting to find that the combination of a hand with an ear occurs on some Greek gems which are to be seen at the British Museum, and which are further inscribed with the word μνημονευε. This has evident reference to the custom mentioned by Horace (Book I, Sat. IX.), of engaging a witness to bear testimony to a summons by touching his ear, when, as the commentators tell us, it was customary to add the word "*Memento*," in reference to a

tradition preserved by Pliny that the seat of memory was in the lobe of the ear. This explanation appears to be very far fetched, and it is more probable that the custom was a survival of an old habit of bringing witnesses into court by the ear. In China proper the custom prevalent in many parts of sending a company of men to bring away the bride at evening is doubtless a relic of the same practice, while among the Lolos and Kachyens on the western frontier of the empire, a mimic attack and capture of the bride forms part of the marriage ceremony. In accordance with the same idea of capture "a slave" (奴) is depicted by "a woman" (女) and "a hand" (又), and the debasing result of slavery on the disposition of its victims, is shown in the character for "anger," "passion" (怒) which is compounded of "a slave's" (奴) "heart" (心). Chinese slaves being commonly prizes taken in war are generally people of foreign tribes. Their language, therefore, would be unintelligible to their captors, and hence the description of "unintelligible gibberish," *nu* (譨) by the symbols for "slaves," (奴), "talk" (言). In this connection it is curious to find that "flint arrow heads," *nu* (砮) are called "slaves," (奴) "stones" (石) evidently referring to the fact that it was mainly through contact with men of uncultured tribes that the Chinese became acquainted with these implements. It is a curious fact that though stone axes are not uncommonly found in China stone arrow heads are extremely rare. The dictionaries add that the flints from which the slave stone arrow heads are made are found in the neighbourhood of the Amur.

If we desire to know what was the manner of life of the inventors of the ideograms we are forced to acknowledge, that though at the present time the people are settled, and agricultural, there must have been a period when they were pastoral. It is now some years since Professor Terrien de Lacouperie brought forward conclusive evidence to show that the Chinese came into China from the region on the north of the Persian Gulf, and lately Mr. Ball, of Lincoln's Inn, has advanced the theory supported by overwhelming testimony that the Chinese are the successors of the Accadians of the country pointed out by Professor Terrien de Lacouperie. The Accadians were originally, as their name signifies, "highlanders," and we know that subsequently they peopled the plain country of the Euphrates. Their primitive nomadic occupations were thus exchanged for the more settled life of dwellers in the plains, and it is especially interesting therefore to find references to a pastoral past among the Chinese, who throughout their recognised history have been a purely agricultural people. Sheep being the animals which would naturally be herded on

the highlands of Central Asia, we should expect to find the hieroglyphic for sheep, 羊, largely used in compound ideographic symbols. And this proves to be the case. A race of shepherds would naturally regard a "large" (大) "sheep" (羊) as synonymous with that which is "beautiful" or "excellent"; and an owner of a fold would consider his "sheep" as representing that to which he has an "equitable right." This was at least in accordance with the ideas of the coiners of the Chinese symbols, who tell us that sheep being the first of the "six animals" was chosen to represent with *ta*, "great," the idea of what is beautiful (美). Again the character for "right" "equity" (義) is composed of parts signifying "my" (我) "sheep" (羊), while a rank, fetid odour is expressed on paper by three sheep (羴) *shen* grouped together. In highland tents the main subject of discussion would be about the ownership of flocks, and so we find that "to talk about" (言) "my" (我) "sheep" (羊) is the equivalent of "to discuss" (議). In the same way the idea of "to nourish" (養) was from the attention necessary to find food for sheep, represented on paper by "to feed" (食) "sheep" (羊). Again water would be a constantly recurring difficulty, and any large pond or lake such as that one (Tengis), so graphically described by De Quincey in his "Flight of a Tartar Tribe," would be called a "sheep water" (洋). This is the term applied by the Chinese to any large expanse of water, more especially at the present time to "an ocean." The nomad Ch'iang tribes on the western frontier are still described on paper by the symbols (羊) *yang*, sheep, (儿) *jin*, men.

On the other hand traces of agricultural life are very commonly to be recognised in the ideographs. "A man" (男) for example is the "strength" (力) of the "field" (田), and as in an agricultural country, the boundaries most commonly in evidence would be those between the fields, so we find that lines drawn between "fields" (田) is the common ideographic representation of "a boundary" (畺). In the sign language of the North American Indians, Autumn is indicated by falling leaves, the natural feature of that season in a forest country; but among the Chinese, Autumn is associated with the harvest, and thus we have "heat" or "fire" (火) combined with "grain" (禾) to signify the third season (秋). From the crops of the harvest thus ripened the farmer naturally looks for his "profit," and so it was considered appropriate to write "profit" (利) by the symbols for grain (禾) and "knife" or "sickle" (刂).

With the barns full, the act of weighing would be associated with measuring their contents, and this idea was evidently in the minds of the inventors of the symbol for "to weigh" (秤) which is compounded of the characters for "to equalise" (平)

"grain" (禾). Debts, at least in the early days of civilisation, were commonly paid in kind. A North American bridegroom buys his wife with so many horses, a Tibetan shepherd pays his bills in sheep, and agriculturists satisfy their creditors with the produce of their fields. Chinese farmers were, at all events at one time, in the habit of doing so also, as is made plain by the character for "to hire" or "to rent" (稅) which signifies "to exchange" (兌) "grain" (禾).

In the earliest notices which we have of the Chinese, we find that they were worshippers of definite objects of adoration. The Emperor Shun, who is said to have reigned more than two thousand years before Christ, sacrificed, we are told, to Shang-ti, and to "Six honoured ones," as well as to the gods of hills and rivers. Sacrifice was a prominent feature in the act of adoration, and at the present time animals are annually offered up on the altars of the non-Buddhist deities. Thus the character for ritual (禮) *Li*, is composed of the symbols (示), for "worship," or "the spirit of the land," and (豐), a sacrificial bowl, while "to pray" (祈), is made up of the characters for "to worship" or "the spirit of the land" (示), and "a hatchet" (斤). Like the Israelites of old the Chinese were in ancient times more commonly in the habit of looking to their gods for protection from earthly enemies than from spiritual foes, and so "the spirit of the land" (示) on one's "right hand" (右), was recognised as symbolical of "to protect," "to defend" (祐); while the same deity (咼), with "a wry mouth" or looking "askance" is synonymous with "evil," "misery" (禍). The universal craving for long life which is regarded as one of the highest earthly blessings, finds expression in the symbols employed for "to pray for" which is composed of "to worship" (礻), and "longevity" (壽).

Turning for a moment to the objects of nature we find that the stars (星) are, in the present form of its character, pictured as "born of" (生) "the sun" (日). The old form of this character was  , or three suns above the earth but the more modern idea as in the case of 姓, "a tribe" above referred to, seems to have suggested the change in form. The symbol used for the East which (as Professor Terrien de Lacouperie has shown) was originally derived from a Chaldæan character, is in its later form (東), "the sun" (日), shining through "a tree" (木).

Following out the same idea the symbol for "clear," "high in the sky," is the sun above a tree (杲), and "dark," "obscure" is the same combination in reversed relations (杳).

Like the North American Indians the Chinese represent "a forest" by a repetition of the symbol for "tree" (林).

According to Chinese ideas the heart is the seat of the emotions. From it proceed "love," "joy," "hatred," and all the passions. "Man's nature" (性), is therefore "born of" (生), "his heart" (忄), and "the feelings," "the desires" (情), are the "natural colour" (青) of the "heart." The Chinese, like all the nations of antiquity, made some confusion between the colours blue and grey. The Egyptians we know used Uat, as the Greeks used γλαυκος for both colours, and the Chinese explain the apparent confusion by saying that the word symbolised by 青 means the "colour of nature." Hence "pure," "clean" (清)—the term used for the present Manchu dynasty—is written as "the natural colour" (青), of "water" (氵). A "spring" (泉), is "white" (白) "water" (水), and "the fountain head," the origin of anything (原) is a "spring" (泉), under a "cliff" (厂). But to return to the heart; "patriotic," "faithful" (忠), is a "central" (中), "heart," (心), that which is not to be turned either to the one side or to the other. With us "to be afraid" is in common parlance "to be white-livered," but in Chinese it is to be (怕), "white-hearted." Another symbol for "timorous" (怯), is the heart (忄), "going" or "fluttering" (去), which is the exact counterpart on paper of the pantomimic action by which the North American Indians express the word—namely, by touching the heart and making a trembling motion of the hand above it. The same people express "to forget" by touching the heart and making the sign for "no," and "to dislike" by indicating the heart and turning the head on one side. The Chinese preserve the same ideas in their characters, that for "to forget" (忘), being made up of "the heart" (心), and "dropped" or "lost" (亡), and that for "to dislike" (怨), "the heart" (心), and "to turn away" (夗).

Equally with the feelings, all mental energy is derived from the heart. "To think" (念), is "to be present" (今), "hearted," and "to be idle," "remiss" (怠), is "to lift" (台), "the heart." A very expressive sign for "to pity" (恤), is the heart's (忄) "blood" (血). "To feel shamed" or "to blush" (恥), is represented by the "ear" (耳), and "heart" in reference to the fact that the ear reddens at the sense of shame.

The Chinese are probably the most peaceable nation upon earth. They quarrel abundantly, but very seldom do their quarrels end in any outbreaks of violence. The use of the fists is almost unknown, and the form which inexpressible anger commonly takes is to shout abuse at one another, or if this fails to satisfy the burning zeal of the angry disputants, a last resort is to seize each other's pig-tails. Being essentially a nation of shop-keepers, the market-place is commonly the scene of strife, and thus "to wrangle noisily" and "to make a disturbance" (鬧), is "to quarrel" (鬥) in "the market place" (市).

But in proportion to the rarity of personal violence on occasions of quarrel, appeals to the law courts are of common occurrence. There are no professional lawyers in China. Each man presents his own case before the magistrate according to certain prescribed rules, and the award is theoretically given in accordance with the principles laid down in the statutes (律), or movements (彳), of the Imperial "pencil" (聿), and laws (例), or "human" (亻), "regulations" (列). It is needless to say that other and baser principles often influence the decisions of the Mandarins, and that in China as elsewhere

> Qui nil habet quo torqueat leges, miser
> In pelle pauper plectitur,

and hence the origin of the saying "He who enters a law court enters a tiger's den." But the love of publicity which marks the Chinese character is as observable in their Courts of Law as in their daily life, as the symbol for "legal cases" (訟), composed as it is of "public" (公), "words" (言), testifies; while the estimate of those who "litigate" is sufficiently indicated in the compound composed of "words" (言), between two dogs (獄).

The professed desire to do justice in criminal causes is exemplified by the character for "punishment" (刑), which is made up of the parts, an "even" (开) "sword" (刂), and which necessarily recalls the idea of the blinded figure of justice with the upright sword which is the emblem of our own tribunals.

The love of money is a leading characteristic of the Chinese, who have few channels for the exercise of the ambitions of life. The main road to distinction is through the examination hall, and as, after all, only a small proportion of the people can ever hope to carve careers for themselves by that means, the accumulation of wealth is the single path to eminence which is open to the bulk of the population. The acquisition of money secures to a Chinaman all that he holds dear. Official rank, consideration, and the comforts and elegancies of life are all within the reach of a man possessed of riches. It is interesting therefore, to see how the Chinese express on paper the idea of "wealth" and "riches" (富) *Fu*, and we find that they combine "a man" or "mouth" (口), and "fields" (田), under "a roof" (宀), to depict the idea. Happiness (福) *Fuh*, is expressed by the use of a part of the compound "a man" (口), and "fields" (田), with the "god of the soil" (礻), added, in acknowledgment of the belief that happiness is to be enjoyed only when the god of the soil sheds the light of his countenance on the possessor of property. In connection with money it is curious to observe from the symbol for silver, that that metal has ever, as now, been the highest currency. The inventors of the character representing

it (銀), had plainly no idea of any currency beyond this "metallic" (金), "limit" (艮). The same sense is connected with many compounds in which this last symbol occurs. "A boundary" (限), is made up of a mound of earth (阝), and a "limit" or "extremity," "a root" (根), "is the extremity" of a tree (木).

But though silver is the highest currency, the Chinese have no silver coinage. Their solitary coin is the cash which varies in size and value in different parts of the Empire, and is consistent only in the universal debasement of the material of which it is supposed to consist. By a strange fiction it is described as being of copper, but a more accurate because vague description of it is given in the character employed to represent it (錢), which signifies "a small" piece (戔), of "metal" (金). This character for "small" or "little" carries its significance into a number of compounds. "Shallow water" (淺) is expressed by "little (戔), water" (氵); "mean," "ignoble," "worthless" (賤); by "little (戔) value" (貝), to "walk mincingly" (踐), by "little" (戔), "feet" (足) *tsuh*, and so on.

But it is time that I brought this paper to a close. The subject is one which is limited only by the number of ideographic characters in the writing, and if by the examples I have adduced I have succeeded in showing that many of these have a distinct anthropological interest, my object in addressing you this evening will have been attained.

Discussion.

In reply to observations made by several Fellows Professor Douglas said:—The evidence in favour of the theory that portions of the Yih King are formulated on the model of Babylonian Syllabaries is stronger than ever. In conjunction with Professor T. de Laconflin, I translated, some few years ago, eight or ten chapters of this oldest book of the Chinese, and the result fully confirmed the belief which we had formed. Pressure of other work has prevented our continuing the translation, but I hope the time may come when we shall be able to go on with it. As to the character composed of "hand" and "ear" meaning "to take" or "to seize," to which reference has been made, and which I mentioned in my Paper, it suggests at once an indication of the common and very natural practice of taking a prisoner by the ear. This mode of seizing a culprit is still common in Northern Europe and in Asia, and may very probably have been in use in China before the queue (1644) offered a still more convenient manner of apprehending a criminal. Chinese etymologists, however, explain the character as having reference to taking off the left ear, as is commonly done in the case of rebels vanquished in battle. In the *Shiking*, or "Books of Odes," which is said to have been edited by

Confucius, the practice is spoken of in an ode in which, following Dr. Legge's translation, there occurs this passage—

> "His martial-looking tiger leaders
> Will here present the left ears [of their foes]."

Coming down to modern times I may mention that after the suppression of a rebellion in the province of Canton some forty years ago, a large chest filled with left ears was forwarded to Governor Yeh, as evidence of the victory gained by the Imperial troops.

MAY 10TH, 1892.

EDWARD B. TYLOR, Esq., D.C.L., F.R.S., *President, in the Chair.*

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and signed.

The following presents were announced, and thanks voted to the respective donors :—

FOR THE LIBRARY.

From the AUTHOR.—Studies in South American Native Languages. By Daniel G. Brinton, M.D. 8vo. Philadelphia, 1892. pp. 67, 20.

—— Anthropology as a Science and as a branch of University Education. By Daniel G. Brinton, M.D. 8vo. Philadelphia, 1892. pp. 15.

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—— Notes on Rude Implements from the North Downs. By F. C. J. Spurrell. 8vo. 1891. pp. 6.

—— Le Varietà Umane della Melanesia. By G. Sergi. 8vo. Roma, n.d. pp. 90. Illustrated.

From the PUBLISHERS.—Russian Characteristics. By E. B. Lanin. 8vo. (Chapman and Hall.) London, 1892. pp. x, 604.

—— Legends and Popular Tales of the Basque People. By Mariana Monteiro. 8vo. (T. Fisher Unwin.) London, 1890. pp. viii, 274. Plates.

From the UNITED STATES BUREAU OF ETHNOLOGY.—Omaha and Ponka Letters. By James Owen Dorsey. 8vo. Washington, 1891. pp. 127.

—— Catalogue of Prehistoric Works, East of the Rocky Mountains. By Cyrus Thomas. 8vo. Washington, 1891. pp. 246. Plates.