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The Herald

Entered as second-class matter September, 1908, in the post office at Monmouth, Oregon, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

RICHARD B. SWENSON
Editor & Publisher

MONMOUTH, OREGON

ISSUED EVERY FRIDAY

FRIDAY, JANUARY 6, 1922

Subscription Rates

One year	\$2.00
Six months	\$1.00
Three months	75 cts

Interpreting China

By Rev. L. V. Lewis

It will not be wise to leave our discussion of the industrial life of China without touching upon the oft repeated accusation that the Chinese are inaccurate. Some have even gone so far as to say that this inaccuracy is an "inherent trait of Chinese character, practically ineradicable, and bound to prove a lasting hindrance to the race in the competition of the modern world". But when we remember that they have had a decimal system for over three thousand years and that they use it in a larger number of tables of weights and measures today than any Western nations, save those which are using the metric system, we think it will go far towards correcting this impression.

We think this seeming inaccuracy can be explained largely by the fact that their language is a clumsy vehicle of thought. A language with no inflections of thought to denote mood, tense or case, where one is compelled to express the finer shades of meaning by additional words, this type of language will make accurate thought and expression extremely difficult. Of course the one determined to push his claim of inaccuracy can say that we are confusing cause and effect for the clumsy language is an indication of a clumsy thinker and that mind and hand would be more precise if the Chinese mind itself were clearer. There are several answers that can be made to this.

First the Chinese have not until recently reached the stage of civilization where accuracy was regarded as necessary or desirable. Even with our own advanced state of civilization nothing is more common than our speech and manners, which, to say the least, fall far short of scientific accuracy or absolute truthfulness. The Chinese have been obliged to live in far closer contact with each other than we could possibly endure. Entire accuracy and honesty of speech demands a degree of virtue to which no race has yet attained. We wonder what would happen if one (only one) of our readers would be absolutely truthful for one whole day. With their close contact the Chinese would deem transparent speech as unwise as a transparent house, brain or heart.

Then the Chinese look a little beyond the mere figures. For instance when we measure roads it is customary for the chain to follow the rise and fall of the roadway, but the Chinaman measuring the hill up which he carries his load calls the distance farther than when he measures down hill. Boatmen on a certain portion of the Yangtze river when the current is swift count the distance one hundred and twenty li up the river, and reckon the same distance as eighty li down the river. While the truth of the matter is, neither one is correct. The first one too much and the second much too short. The reason is they substantially find this difference in time and cost of transporting goods in these different directions.

There is one thing however that all students of China are agreed upon, and that is her reliability. Her word can be depended upon. Every Chinese firm recognizes that the one principle underlying all long continued success in trade is reliability. They may not be honest, for honesty is based upon reliability from principle without regard to consequences, but they are reliable because long centuries of

experience has taught them that it is sound business judgment. Another cause for this reliability is the conviction that one is hamiliated in the next world by a financial failure in this one. If therefore, a father dies with outstanding obligations very often his sons or grandsons will toil for years to pay the debts that their father's credit in the next world as well as their own in this will be established.

This, of course, is one of the reasons for the reliability of the Chinese bank. Then the Bankers' Guild in guaranteeing the reliability of a cashier does not depend upon the inherent trustworthiness of Chinese cashiers but upon a little custom which could very nicely be introduced into this country. The entire family and clan of the defaulter is, under Chinese custom, responsible for his peculations and will suffer both financially and physically for the absconding cashier, and then the guild will trace him to the ends of the earth and take his life. If no man could secure a cashier's position in America until a family strong enough to make good his loss would guarantee his honesty, and if he then held his position with the knowledge that if he became a defaulter his family would be compelled to make good the loss and he would be followed to the ends of the earth, not for trial but for assassination, defaulting would be a rare crime in American banks.

(Continued Next Week)

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and for years it was supposed to be incurable. Doctors prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Catarrh is a local disease, greatly influenced by constitutional conditions and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Medicine, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is a constitutional remedy, is taken internally and acts through the blood on the mucous surfaces of the system. One Hundred Dollars reward is offered for any case that Hall's Catarrh Medicine fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials.

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