

OUR diplomatic and consular agents are never doing better work than when they are making us acquainted with the manners and customs, the literature and wisdom of the foreign peoples among whom they live. And work of this kind is the more valuable owing to the unusual facilities enjoyed by such officials for becoming masters of the languages and literature of the nations among whom they often pass a good part of their lifetime—advantages not enjoyed by the solitary European scholar in his study or in a library. All this applies with tenfold force to the mysterious peoples of the East. Mr. Giles, our intelligent and learned Vice-Consul at Shanghai, has done good service already in this line. We owe to him a really valuable work, *Historic China*, besides such lighter but not the less useful sketches as *Chinese Sketches* and *Strange Studies from a Chinese Studio*. His new volume is of a still more useful kind. It serves as an admirable supplement to various histories of Chinese literature, by giving us a collection of extracts of a certain length from all the famous writers of China, from the time of Confucius down to A.D. 1650, a space of 2200 years. The work is well done and thoroughly entertaining. It will deepen the impression of the strange unlikeness between the Chinese and the Western mind and taste, but at the same time will give a favourable impression of the shrewdness and wit of Chinese sages. A great deal of information is scattered through Mr. Giles pages. It is interesting to know that the historian Ssu-ma Chien (2nd cent. B.C.) is regarded as the Herodotus of China, and that the epoch of the Sung dynasty (A.D. 900-1200) ranks as the Elizabethan age of Chinese literature. The father of the Marquis Tseng, we find (Tseng Kuo-fau), is reckoned as a distinguished essayist. We had marked a number of interesting passages for quotation, but regret that space will not allow us to give them. Mr. Giles deserves our best thanks for a thoroughly successful book. —The Dublin Review, Vol. 97 [1887]

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