

The *Lancet*, in an article entitled "The Centenary of Thomas Wakley," the great medical reformer and founder of the *Lancet*, gives a most interesting account of the part played by his young wife in inducing him to give up actual practice and devote himself to righting the many wrongs which had crept into the practice of medicine.

Women are born reformers, and, where it is not in their power to accomplish much by their own personal efforts, it is so often the case that they are the inspirers of great movements for which they get no credit and to which their names are not attached.

In speaking of Dr. Wakley, the *Lancet* says:—"He was a big man, and felt that there had grown up within him the capability to do a big work. He was a born reformer and an eloquent propagandist, and the routine of practice stifled him. It was not his profession that he disliked—he was absolutely devoted to the science of medicine—it was that, burning with righteous indignation at the many abuses existent in that profession, he felt that he could serve it better as a reformer than as a general practitioner.

"Such impulses counted for almost everything in deciding him to take the extreme step of leaving the profession to enter upon a systematic attempt to set aright the abuses; but we have it on personal record from himself that it was the wish of his young wife that actually precipitated him upon the course with which his name will ever be associated. Mrs. Wakley had taken an objection to his remaining in practice and found his resolve to leave it most welcome, so that, no sooner was his scheme formulated so far that he could speak of it to his friends of a like way of thinking, than he found himself encouraged to persevere in it in the very quarter where he might have expected opposition. It was almost as much due to the future editor's respect for his wife's wishes as it was to his own burning desire for reform that the *Lancet* owed its origin."

It is impossible to refrain from quoting the following admirable description of the sufferings endured by those who set about righting wrongs. The history of every public movement shows us that pioneers must suffer almost to the verge of martyrdom.

"When a man lives a life of battle against wrongs and abuses, it is, and must ever be, his fate to be compelled to wait for years without recognition of the value of his work—if value there be—by the persons whose good opinion is alone worth having. The irresponsible and unbalanced agitator, the crank, and the self-advertiser all bear the unfurled banner of the reformer, and whirl it ever lest haply it may catch the breezes of popular applause; and their shrieking cries somewhat drown the steady tones of the true prophet. But the shrillness of the charlatan passes soon into hoarseness, and the hoarseness into a husky whisper, and the whisper into discredited silence, whilst the tones of the true prophet grow louder and clearer as time goes on; and the more men find his warnings to have been wanted and his actions to have worked for practical good, the more do his tones become reinforced by the commending and endorsing expressions of his fellows."

## A Book of the Week.

### "QUAINT KOREA."\*

THREE things are pre-eminently important in a book—a good title, a good beginning, and a good ending.

This book possesses these three points. The beginning fills you with a desire to know what happened, whether Mrs. Q. really went to Korea in the Mandarin's junk, and dragged her unwilling husband with her; in fact, the opening scene carries you so far that you have swallowed a large dose of Eastern history before you are aware of it.

Only a few years ago hardly anyone knew where Korea was. People boldly asserted that of course it was near Greece, and, finding their assertion doubted, took refuge in silence. The customs of Korea are curious, and scholarship ranks above everything else but kingship, and a man's social position depends upon the prestige he can establish for himself at competitive examinations.

"Every fairly educated Korean writes poems and paints pictures."

Animals abound in the country, and the creatures treated with the most veneration are the snakes; even the poorest Korean will share his meal with the reptiles that crawl about the rocks.

The Koreans have a special vocation for their blind, though the reader may feel thankful not to be in their too near neighbourhood, as they "frighten the devil to death by means of noise more diabolical than any Satan ever heard, or catch him in a bottle."

The writer has caught the subtle Eastern tone, which has a charm not to be described, and for a time we live in the heart of Korean life, with its stately pageants and courtly ceremonial.

Perhaps the English are too ready to think that no civilisation exists that is not Western civilisation, and it is rather startling to find a culture existing of which we have little dreamt. "The Korean gentlewomen are skilled in music, in Chinese and Korean literature, and are unsurpassed mistresses of the needle, more than able with the brush, and thoroughly acquainted with every detail of the complicated Korean etiquette. They are deft in the nice ceremonies of the toilet, they know the histories of Korea, of China, and, perhaps, of Japan. They are familiar with their own folk-lore, and can repeat it glibly and picturesquely. They are Nurses and mothers and wives by nature and training. Above all, they are taught (and they learn) to be amiable. They are instructed in the art of charming, and in the grace of being gentle, as soon as they are taught to walk."

As a home of art, Korea is remarkable, and it was the birthplace of a great deal that is finest and highest in the art of that wonderful art country, Japan.

But Korea has no religion beyond a worship of ancestors, combined with a code of morals. They have a strong belief in evil spirits, whose power is to be averted by harsh and discordant noises.

Some interesting chapters are given on the customs of Japan and China, and the character of the Chinese and Japanese.

\* "Quaint Korea," by Louise Jordan Miln. Publishers: Osgood, McIlvaine and Co., London.

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