

there seem to be many topics quite as good as geography and the weather, and one hears long, well-thought-out, and well-expressed arguments on philosophic and moral subjects, freely interspersed with quotations from their classics. The philosophising Chinaman is perhaps rather too celestial, rather too much above ordinary mortals, and certainly shows too little interest in the common everyday affairs of this world: but he is an interesting man to meet at home, and, mingled with the irritation which his superciliousness so often inspires, I had a feeling of real regard for a man who can aspire to such a lofty standpoint as the Chinaman looks to, and in his case I felt that the seeming superciliousness was not all simple self-conceit, but that he had in him the pride engendered by belonging to an empire which has stood intact for thousands of years, and which was approaching civilisation when we ourselves were steeped in barbarism.