

# Village Life in China



CHINESE VILLAGERS AT HOME.

# Village Life in China

A STUDY IN SOCIOLOGY

BY

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“Chinese Characteristics”

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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## Foreword

**T**HESE chapters are written from the standpoint of one who, by an extended experience in China, has come to feel a profound respect for the numerous admirable qualities of the Chinese, and to entertain for many of them a high personal esteem. An unexampled past lies behind this great race, and before it there may lie a wonderful future. Ere that can be realized, however, there are many disabilities which must be removed. The longer one is acquainted with China, the more deeply is this necessity felt. Commerce, diplomacy, extension of political relations, and the growing contact with Occidental civilization have, all combined, proved totally inadequate to accomplish any such reformation as China needs.

The Chinese village is the empire in small, and when that has been surveyed, we shall be in a better condition to suggest a remedy for whatever needs amendment. It cannot be too often reiterated that the variety in unity in China is such, that affirmations should always be qualified with the implied limitation that they are true somewhere, although few of them may hold good everywhere. On the other hand, the unity in variety is such that a really typical Chinese fact, although of restricted occurrence, may not on that account be the less valuable.

China was never so much in the world's thought as to-day, nor is there any apparent likelihood that the position of this empire will be less conspicuous at the opening of the twentieth century. Whatever helps to a better understanding of the Chinese people, is an aid to a comprehension of the Chinese problem. To that end this volume is intended as a humble contribution.

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