

KOREA'S FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR

by

Dr. E. M. Rosser

Today in Korea there is a strong Evangelical Church. Practically all the missionary work has been carried out by missionaries from America. However, the first missionary and martyr in Korea was the Rev Jermain Thomas a Welshman who sailed for the Far East in July 1863.

He was the son of the Rev Thomas minister of Hanover Congregational Church, Llanover near Abergavenny, Gwent. He was born at Rhayader, Radnorshire on September 7th 1840. [1839]

He was three years at Llandovery College where he studied Latin, Greek and French. He then spent a year as assistant master at a school in Northamptonshire kept by a Congregational minister, from whence he matriculated at London University. Following this he studied for five years at New College London where he graduated B.A. and was the outstanding student of his year.

He preached his first sermon in his father's church at Hanover on the text 'Jesus the same yesterday, today and for ever' (Heb. 13:8). He was ordained at Hanover in June 4th 1863 to become a missionary under the LMS and was appointed to China.

He and his wife sailed for Shanghai July 1863 and landed in December. His path was directed from China to Korea in tragic circumstances. Three months after his arrival in China his wife died after a premature confinement.

He became interested in Korea through meeting some Koreans in China. He also had some differences with the London Missionary Society at this time. He wanted to attempt to enter Korea with the Christian gospel but the mission board would not agree. In 1865 he went to Chefoo where he met two Catholic Koreans in the home of the Rev A. Williamson of the National Bible Society of Scotland. Thomas decided to go to Korea as a Colporteur of the Society; the Rev A. Williamson supplied scriptures, tracts, and expenses. They sailed in a Chinese junk, arrived in Korea in September 1865 and remained until December before returning to China. During this time Thomas had learnt something of the language and decided upon the suitability of Korea as a mission field for the Christian gospel.

Previous to this date French Roman Catholic missionaries had entered Korea in disguise. When they were discovered there was a terrible slaughter of them and their converts by the Koreans. when 19000 lost their lives. As a result the French High Admiral prepared to attack the country. As there was no other European in China who knew anything of the Korean language, Thomas was prevailed upon to join the expedition as an interpreter. Thomas

travelled from Peking to Chefoo to join the French Fleet. Thomas was anxious to return to Korea, so as the Fleet had not reached Chefoo he decided to travel on the ill-fated American trading Schooner 'The General Sherman'. This boat arrived off the west coast of Korea in August 1866. The Koreans wanted no further Western interference so the crew met a hostile coast-guard who would not allow trading contacts. The General Sherman nevertheless proceeded to sail up the Taitong river to P'yongyang. Thomas threw scripture portions ashore at Kang-suh-po-san. The son of a Korean who became a Christian testified to his father having received one of these. Further up the river two Catholics attempted to take some melons out to the ship. They were arrested and duly executed.

At Sook-Syum, Preston, the owner of the ship, went ashore and with his Chinese interpreter where he met the Governor of P'yongyang and the commander of the garrison. The commander and three of his men went out to visit the General Sherman. The ship's crew asked to see his insignia of office given to him by the king of Korea and they then refused to return it. The four men were forced into one of the ship's lifeboats and taken up the river. The Koreans offered a large reward for the rescue of their countrymen. A Korean named Pak Choon Kwun rowed out to the lifeboat which was having difficulties in rapids. The Korean prisoners attempted to jump into the rowing boat. Two of them

were drowned but the General and the remaining Korean managed to escape in P'yongyang. Hostilities continued, firing from the ship lasting intermittently for two weeks during which time twenty Koreans were killed and many wounded. The West Coast of Korea has huge tidal levels. One day as the river receded the General Sherman was stuck on the mud banks. The enraged Koreans determined to burn the boat and sent down the river a large boat loaded with burning pine branches on September 3rd 1860. The crew and passengers which numbered 24 (19 Malay and Chinese and five others) jumped into the water to escape and were killed as they waded ashore. Thomas and a Mr Hogarth were English, the owner of the ship, the master and the mate were Americans.

Thomas, after he waded ashore, offered his slayer a Bible which he refused at first. Thomas then knelt down to pray before he was killed. The man who killed him took the Bible home. His nephew later graduated in the Union Christian College in P'yongyang and helped in Bible translation work. A twelve year old boy in the crowd received 3 copies of the scriptures Thomas distributed on the shore. Fearing to keep the books he gave them to a soldier who tore out the leaves and papered the inside of his home with them. Through reading these scriptures some Koreans became Christians.

From such beginnings the Gospel has spread in Korea into a strong Evangelical church. On May 8th 1927 a thousand Korean

Christians assembled for a Memorial Service to the Rev R. J. Thomas on the island of Book-syon where it is believed he was buried. The same year the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church appointed a committee of one from each Presbytery to erect a Thomas Memorial Church at P'yongyang. By 1932 \$ 1860 had been collected. The church was dedicated and opened on September 1933 in the presence of the members of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in Korea, they were then meeting in P'yongyang which since the time in 1952 is the capital of Communist North Korea, where as far as we know no churches are allowed.

The name of the Rev R. J. Thomas and the story of his heroic action in taking the Christian Gospel to Korea (under such tragic circumstances) is well known in that land today.

I have visited the church from which he came at Llanover where there is a photograph of him, and a stone commemorating his pioneer mission work. (There are also some interesting original letters).

THOMAS

Gen Sherman a smuggler, reported. Letter. Pauline Morache, Nov 1, 1867. from Melham, France to Rev Robt Thomas. (LMS)

Preceding in China: living with Edkins (3 in the Peking mission. Edkins, Dr. Johnson & Thomas), "keep a servant boy (a Chinese), a groom (a Malay) & a pony". Letter. Thomas to parents. Peking Jan. 27, 1865. (LMS)

My earnest desire to live amongst the Chinese" - Letter. RST to Tidman. Shanghai May 15, 1864. (LMS)

Thomas resigns from Society. Determined not to work in Shanghai. Insists on Mandam. Letter. Mumhead to Tidman. Dec. 8, 1864.

Lack of devotedness & consecration; love of language & travel. (LMS)

"Mr Thomas has left us and joined the Imperial Maritime Customs which I think will suit him much better than missionary work." Letter. Dr. J. Henderson to CMS Shanghai Nov. 7, 1865. Working under Sir Robt. Hart, at Customs House in Chefoo. Letter. Mumhead. Shanghai Dec. 20, 1864. (LMS)

"...forgive the past and receive me back." I confess my hesitations. I was wish, too independent.. ^{Chefoo} Jan 31, 1865 RST to Tidman (LMS)

"Names; opinions that I am a wandering star are quite without foundation - I travel for my health." RST to Parents, Peking. Jan. 27, 1865. (NBSS).

R. J. Thomas.

The most consecutive and authoritative account of Thomas's early years is in Rees Thomas, History of the Welsh Churches, 1871.

Was Thomas an agent of the Natl. Bible Society of Scotland? Yes, in 1865. In 1866, back with L.M.S., he represented both Nat. Bib. Soc. Scotland, and the L.M.S. (letter of 11. Frank Knight, Gen. Sec. Natl. Bib. Soc. of Scotland to David Chamberlain, of the L.M.S. Glasgow 19 April, 1928).

- It was probably Alexander Williamson who influenced Thomas toward the Natl. Bib. Soc. The two were fellow voyagers on the good ship Palmerston, which reached Shapton in 1863. Williamson had been under L.M.S. but after health leave in Scotland, 1857-60, returned under the Natl. Bib. Soc. of Scotland (letter, Thomas to Pierce to David Chamberlain. London. 25 March 1930).

Thomas's father was "Robert Thomas of Hanover" - of a working class family. Influenced by the "immortal Williams of Wern". Through his wife he came into considerable wealth. (Welsh mss. in L.M.S. Library, London.) ①

Thomas was Welsh. Born 1840(?) at Rhyader, Radnorshire, a member of Hanover, Mon. - ordained June 4, 1863 at Hanover. Member of Westminster Congregational Church, Buckingham Gate, Lond.

① LMS records, + H.W. Ch. record for 1835.

London Mission.

SHANGHAI,

Feb. 4th /64

File

My dear Parents,

You may imagine we were very glad to get your letter which went unluckily to the French Post Office here, so that had William not called accidentally we should not have had it yet. Glad to hear you are all well - hope soon to hear again, longer letters and more news.

At Shanghai, all is well - to take up the news where my last hurried letter left off. William will tell you all about himself. I am sure you will be delighted to find him so well off. He is quite cheerful, and I hope in a year or two that he will be able to send you considerable remittances. Even next year included he may send you some and a trifle of £20 or so this year. Shanghai is a frightfully expensive place. Everybody says that 1/- in England = a tael 7.4. out here. Still I trust we shall manage alright. If not, we must go to some cheaper spot. William will have to pay us 10 dollars a week, out of his 100 dollars per month (for the next 3 months, afterwards more) a dollar = from 4/2d - 5/-, according to state of exchange. William even then will only be paying his expenses.

For the last month, Mr. Wylie (of whom I spoke to you as the gentleman who gave me lessons in Chinese in London) who arrived thro' Russia & Siberia & Mongolia, has been staying with us. He goes away soon to next door (Dr. Henderson) as we shall want a spare room.

You know he is an agent of the Bible Society and will spend most of his time in travelling about - up the Yang-ho-kiang etc. I expected this month to go up to Hankow to see Mr. John for I have received most kind letters of invitation from him, but it is fixed for me to make a trip up later in the Spring. Mrs. John is going to

England about April, so will stay some time with us here. You must have her at Llanover to give you all the news of Hankow & Shanghai.

I think I told you about the rest of our party - Dudgeon, Williamson off to Tientsin but ice prevented the steamer entering Taku and so put back to Chefoo and are living in tiny houses - half English, half Chinese - all their luggage in the go-down - a most miserable predicament.

Alexander Williamson, wife & child, went up to Chefoo some weeks ago and the Captain of the steamer made a mistake, ran the vessel ashore in the night - snow two feet on the ground - All the passengers were landed in boats and had to walk and ride on mules in the night to Chefoo - 30 miles off !! In any case, I am thankful that we hadn't to go to Tientsin. Carrie would have been miserable.

We are busy getting our large sitting room in order. Hope to get in it in about a fortnight. My harmonium will be a splendid ornament in it. Carrie is getting on very nicely - her servant understands a little English, so as Carrie gets lessons every day from a Chinese lady, they both get on very well.

I am very busy all day long. From 7 a.m. to half past, when fine, go out for a ride on a little Chinese pony. breakfast over a little after eight. Chinese teacher of the Shanghai dialect from 8 - 12, after walk & talk till 1½ - then dinner. From 3 - 5, teacher of the Pekin dialect - then a little walk - tea at six - from 7 - 10 twice a week some meeting takes up an hour and a half and then read and have a late walk with William. I mix a good deal with the Chinese and feel myself getting along very comfortably in the language.

Every Thursday evening, there is a sort of address delivered. I have conducted the Service once - and on Sunday have preached to excellent congregations three times.

Lately a Church (Congregational) has been formed here. A new Chapel is being built on our ground. At present the morning service is held in the Shanghai library - a fine room. In the evening in the Church of England. For this year, Mr. Muirhead, in addition to his missionary duties, takes the pastorate at the salary, at least 1000 taels = about £350. Mr. Muirhead has a wonderful faculty in composition so the sermons tho' good don't take up much of his time. The congregation are intelligent & respectable.

We have already some very pleasant acquaintances here.

The weather at present is delightful, couldn't be better.

The smallpox is however prevalent, and Miss Gamble, the young lady who came out in the "Polmaice" has had a most dangerous attack of it. She is recovering nicely.

The Captain and Officers of the Polmaice have been up here repeatedly. They are loading cotton and sail for Liverpool in a month's time.

Carrie can stand the winter here allright but I fear the summer for - all agree in saying that it is awful - most trying especially to ladies.

Fortunately Japan is near at hand in case of sickness

Best love to Lizzie, Annie and Lallie from dear Carrie & myself. I enclose Mum's letter.

I am,
Your affectionate Son,
Sgd R. Jermain Thomas.

Dearest Lallie,

In a month the Polmaice is going to Liverpool so I'll send you a fan or something pretty - you may expect it at Llanover in about five months from this date.

How foolish Emma was with Miall - tho' I should like to run up the Sugar Loaf very much, I don't care about seeing Abergavenny. The country around here is so flat, as Lord Llanover found.

Give my kind regards to his Lordship when you go to the next party there.

"Remember me to all enquiring friends" as people say.

Carrie sends you lots of kisses.

I am,

Your loving Brother

Sgd R. Jermain

Shanghai. Feb 4th 1854.

Copy

London Mission.
June 16th/64

My dear Parents,

I think I told you in my last letter I was going into the interior for two, three weeks.

I have been & returned pleased on the whole with what I saw, but not feeling very well. I had a slight attack of something like Cholera. The Cholera has begun to visit Shanghai and no mistake. A fortnight ago, two young wives, English, who had been here four months, died in twelve hours, and there is a case or two of death almost daily. Things are looking serious. Certainly of all climates in the summer season, Shanghai seems to be the worst. It is wet, hot & cold. Enough to give anyone the ague -

I am getting on very comfortably - for the two worst months, I may go to the North. A young missionary travelling about here is considered the best thing possible for he picks up the language much more rapidly and pleasantly.

The Muirheads and Hendersons are quite well - indeed the Cholera outbreak has only seized on new comers. It was quite immaterial about Bate sending the book bill to the Society - I have heard nothing of it of course.

I should like, were I to stay at Shanghai, to have Annie here, but am quite sure her health would not stand it, and besides should she be ill, the Directors would not pay our expenses to some sanatorium like Japan. Of course, I feel very lonely, but I must say that I am quite happy with the friends here. Should Lockhart who left for home a fortnight ago urge the Directors to send me to Hankow, I should be glad simply on health's sake.

1. P.T.O.

I have no particular news to communicate . I continue to receive most kind letters from John. To-day we expect to see Mrs. John & their little children en route for England in Steamer Sea King. They go to Swansea & will most likely arrive in England 80 days from this date.

The steamer doesn't come up to Shanghai, but stops at Husing about 14 miles down the river. Mrs. Muirhead and I are going today sometime to wish Mrs. J. goodbye. I have given them your address so that you will be able to see her and have a chat about China.

And how about Lizzie - I hope she is quite well and B. too. Were I you I wouldn't try to bring anything about between A. Rowland & Annie, for A. Rowland, tho' a very nice fellow, is very unhealthy. I am quite sure of it.

I suppose by this time William is nearing Liverpool. Am glad you will be able to see him. His former master, I regret to say, is every ill - succumbing.

I take lunch nearly every day at the house of the latter. The lady, Mrs. Bush, has a splendid piano - sings & plays remarkably well. It is dull here during the winter of four months. No ships can come up the river. Even now, on the ponds, the ice is a foot thick - it will be a yard thick soon and not melt until the middle of March. On the road to Peking the carts & mules go right over the ice. It is so strong. You won't hardly know me in my travelling dress. A large fur cap hiding everything but the nose and mouth The North wind here cuts like a razor. I have bought a pretty pony called "Indira" so shall ride to Peking - a distance of nearly 500 miles - it will take us 17 days. My two servants and luggage of course occupy the carts.

In the inns where we put up on the road, there is a raised platform of brick covered with mats - the moment the traveller arrives a fire's made and heats a flue under this platform - you put your bed on it and soon get as warm as toast - but towards morning, nearly freeze when the fire goes out. To give you an idea of charges - for dinner for myself and servants, i.e. beef, rice & cabbage, a small sleeping room, fire, hot water, etc - one night = 1 dollar (s4.6d) As I am always engaged in distributing bills, the expense is, of course, paid by the National Bible Society of Scotland. The mails from here are so irregular that you will be some time before getting this letter -but that can't be helped. I will of course write immediately on my arrival in Peking.

With best love to all,

I am,

Your affectionate Son,

(Sgd) R. Jermain Thomas.

Copy

London Mission.

Peking,

Jan 27/65

My dear Parents,

Last week I wrote you by the most convenient mail from here -that is via Russia. It is speedier than the Marseilles mail in the winter time. I wrote also to Mrs. Godfrey. Should any accident or delay happen to the letters, please write & tell Mrs. G. that there is a letter on the way to her. I spoke in my letter of ... £50 for a tombstone for dear Carry. I think including all expenses that oughtn't to exceed £40 to Shanghai. Should there be £10 spare -after paying the expense of your journey to London etc., to choose the slab, will you kindly buy me four engravings - £1.1.0 each, with glass & simple but elegant frames and have them carefully packed up and sent to me in a box most carefully packed and addressed to me, care of Commissioners of Customs, Chief. I want them addressed to him for Captains of ships are much more willing to oblige Customs Officers than Missionaries, inasmuch as a Commissioner of Customs can oblige them in many ways. And the Commissioner has given me permission to have my things sent to them. Mamma grumbles that I don't write long letters nor acknowledge what you write in yours. I fancy several of my letters must have gone a missing. This last week I received Mamma's likeness. I don't much admire it, but am nevertheless glad to have it. Mamma's suspicions that I am a wandering star are quite without foundation - I travel for my health - it's happily reestablished, now here I intend to remain - the goal of my ambition - you will know that the London Mission here is composed of three - Mr. Edkins, Dr. Dudgeon & myself. I am very busy everyday, going on with my Chinese studies, and preparing my rooms. We all live in these large premises. Dr. Dudgeon lives

1.P.T.O.

separately. I have four rooms - board with the Edkins. Keep a servant boy (a Chinaman) a groom (a Mongol) and a pony. I am very happy here. But I endured such hardships during my long journey that any place seems comfortable. I have had an audience with all the foreign ambassadors to the Court of Peking respecting my travels. Dined the night before last at the English Legation with the two attaches (Secretaries) of the British Legation.

I preach my first sermon here next Sunday (in Chinese). on the parable Dives & Lazarus. We have a nice large Chapel in the front of our premises. Last week was a week of prayer. All the missionaries met daily at each other's houses. It is really not an easy task to give details of our daily life here.

We live very well. Dine on venison, hares, pheasants, partridges, beef, mutton , all excellent and very cheap. All frozen so keep well. It was but yesterday that Mr. and Mrs. Edkins bought fifty partridges. We can buy a deer for nine shillings and a sheep for seven shillings.

Then for dessert, apples, pears and grapes every morning at breakfast and evening at dinner. We thus live infinitely better and cheaper than at home in England. Peking is interesting at all times, but particularly now before the Chinese New Year. Mongols, Koreans are pouring in. Mr. Edkins and I have a class of Chinese enquirers every morning. Then after breakfast, there is preaching in the Chapel for three or four hours by the native assistants. Then I go a shopping, or for a ride. The weather is very fine but cold. No snow, but during the high winds, plenty of dust. I hear this post of my luggage left in Chefoo has been stolen, so I have lost about £10 worth of things!!!! But we take these misfortunes very coolly in China. Not long ago at

Tientsin in the home of a Methodist missionary named Innocent, the thieves broke in their bedroom whilst they were asleep and stole the time-piece from on the mantelpiece! The fewer things one has the better. I am compelled to spend a good deal just now for furniture & clothes. I get everything made here. I wonder what kind of stuff are made of. John of Hankow is coming up here in the Spring and is going with Edkins to make a tour in Mongolia. The whole superintendence of the preaching and teaching will thus during a month or two fall on my shoulders. I hope William has got safely home again. As I have told you over & over again - if his were the studious & clever persons?..... owing to the present and for some time past utter stagnation of business, no place could have been got for him. I should tremble at his taking, even if he could get it, a low place. Persons of good education who came to lose situations in China as a rule drink themselves to death. It is a frightful curse drink here. I have seen a whole community of merchants get drunk after dinner, and the next day not feel at all ashamed.

Mamma asks "Where is your "M..... now" . Now I can't read the word tho' I have spent five minutes over it. I only heard by last Sunday's mail that the vessel bringing my books (Spirit of the Days) had safely arrived in Shanghai, but owing to the Tientsin river being frozen, I shall not get the contents till beginning of April.

We are not at all alarmed about the "rebels" here.

I am glad to hear that dear Lallie is better. If a trip would do her good to Torquay or anywhere else, I'll give up my wish for the engravings and let Mamma go with her to Devonshire.

Now don't make any mistake about the taste of
tombstone - plain - but elegant - with a cross - an ecclesiastical
looking one - . Do not add to or alter my epitaph, and don't say
anything about it to Mrs. Godfrey at present . The colours of the
letters and shape are to be on what is termed the Gothic style. I
expect to send you the money not long after this letter reaches you.
Tell dear Annie that before next Autumn she may expect from me as a
present a sable muff - of course only the skins made up - she may
line it and stuff it as she likes, and Lallie shall have an ermine
one. The cap I have on now is made of sable - dear but nice to look
at and feel. Now with love again to all, Believe me,

Your affectionate son,

Sgd R. Jermain Thomas.

The Bessie never came nearer than Hongkong. I enclose you William's
two letters. Let him know as soon as you can that when his letters
arrived at Chefoo, I was in Corea and only received them Jan 5th 1865

[The date should be 1866. not 1865 See his letters to L.M.S.]

Copy

Chefoo.
May 8th /65.

My dear Parents,

I fear the cheque for T.100 = £33 etc. will not reach you till you get this letter. It's very difficult to send money from here. I tried to send it nearly two months ago. I hope you will receive it allright. You will remember that Messrs. Tribner & Co., of Paternoster Row will soon send in my book-bill, which you will please settle .

What a long time since I received a letter from you - I wonder what can be the matter. No news as yet of William. No "Bessie" arrived. I have sent letters to await him at Shanghai. There is indeed no chance for him in China. You have no idea of the panic that prevails here in business. But lately the larger & influential houses, Messrs. Lindsay & Co., Messrs. Fletcher & Co., have failed and a similar unhappy fate is impending over many other reputed wealthy houses.

All are reducing their staff of employees, and the Rev. Mr. Thompson who's just up here from Shanghai, told me it was quite pitiful to see so many well trained business young men knocking about the bad expensive hotels of Shanghai, consuming all their time in the excitement of billiard playing.

It is indeed a sad fact. Poor Lang with whom William was for a short time is a hopeless invalid from liver complaint.

No particular news. I am sick - had a dose of opium administered by my medical attendant last night, so to-day am much better. I should be nearly dead in Shanghai.

The weather is getting frightfully warm over here.

I keep on the Chinese service regularly in a quiet way and take more and more pleasure in it. Lately I was at the usual monthly

I. P.T.O.

pray r meeting of the Missionaries here - No-one had anything
any particular importance to communicate.

I hear from Peking that Edkins is just off on a tour
of Mongolia.

I had a large attendance in the English Church
yesterday . I had both to preach and play the harmonium, so was rather
tired after it all.

I'll finish this note just now and write another when
I'm better - perhaps by this mail.

With best love to all.

I am,

Your affec.son,

(Sgd) R.Jermain Thomas.

Peking.

Dec 4th 1866

My dear Sir,

Long ere this reaches you, the report of what has occurred in Corea will have touched your heart with anxiety and grief. My wife and I cannot but think with the deepest pain of the sorrow that must have been caused by the tidings of what we fear has occurred, not only to your self but to our lost friend's Mother and sisters. You will wonder that you have not been written to. In fact, there was nothing satisfactory to communicate. There was uncertainty in the reports that reached us, and the details conflicted with each other. I waited for more definite information and have been travelling for nearly a month in a neighbouring province. Our beloved friend left us on July thirteenth. I have a note from him from Chefoo in which he merely informed me that he was going to Corea in a merchant ship and expressed the hope that I would not postpone an intended journey into Mongolia on account of his absence. This journey I took in company with Mr. Muirhead and returning on the 12th Oct. heard for the first time the shocking news that the General Sherman had been destroyed by the Coreans and all on board had been put to death. Then however, as now, there were many persons who declined to believe that your son was among those who met this cruel fate. I prefer myself to hold by the little thread of remaining hope till the Spring. The reason against hope is the belief of the French Missionaries derived from native Corean statements that none were spared. The reasons for hope are that our friend spoke Corean and would be able to make the people understand that he might be useful to them, also that he had

with him a young Pekinese Christian one of my students. Why should the Koreans kill Chinese in a time like the present?

However, those of us who allow ourselves to hope that your son may still be heard of, have no positive evidence to rest on, but simply such presumptions as those I have just mentioned. His having with him a Korean dress would favour his escape.

The French are in possession of an island at the mouth of the river that leads to the Capital and will commence warlike operations in the Spring. They will take the Capital probably with great ease, and we shall then obtain full information.

The disaster to the General Sherman took place in another river farther to the North West and nearer the Chinese boundary. Up this river, there is a rich Korean city and the country in its neighbourhood constitutes the most fertile district in Korea. The city is called Ping An. The General Sherman went apparently to open a trade in needles, matches, etc. A Scotch Merchant at Tientsein when I asked did not believe they had firearms for sale to the Koreans for the principle reason that they could not at the present time be had. One account said that the General Sherman went four tides up the river. Another stated that she went aground at the mouth. The French missionary, Ridel, states that the local Mandarin referred the case of the prisoners to the King's Father, who, as Regent, ordered the decapitation of the whole number. If he be lost, we have lost one whom we much loved, who showed extraordinary linguistic talent, who endeared himself much to the Chinese by his amiability and was capable of becoming extremely useful among them as a Missionary. God hath done as it hath pleased Him and who shall say unto Him "What doest Thou?"

Anticipating that you would, on hearing the gloomy tidings through the newspapers, write to Dr. Mullens for information, I sent him in October such particulars as we then knew here, and thought it best to postpone writing to you personally till more satisfactory communications could be obtained.

Commending you to the sympathy of our Compassionate High Priest on High,

I remain,

Faithfully Yours,

(Sgd) Joseph Edkins.

A Widow in Aberdeen has just had to mourn over the tidings of the loss by drowning of her son, Mr. Masson, when approaching Swatow, the scene of his intended labours as a Missionary. He was a young man of great piety and promise, and was carried away by a wave from the forecandle in the midst of an argument he was holding in defence of our Lord's divinity.

Addressed to Reverend Robert Thomas, Near Llanover, Monmouthshire

Melum (Seine et Marne) France,
Rue de Ponthierry 8.

Oct 26th 1867.

My dear Sir,

Long before this, I think you have had a letter from Mr. Edkins, who meant to tell you about my friendly intercourse with your dear regretted son, and who wishes me to write to you all the particulars I recollect of. Here they are.

I met him first in the summer 1864 in Peking at Mr. Edkins where he was on a visit. I was at once much pleased with the earnestness of his principles, the absence of all cant, joined to those frank and gentlemanly ways which were his own. At that time already, two or three Chinese told me about his being so affable, so pleasing and how well he spoke their language which is a very important thing with them. When I knew some time after that he had left the Mission, I was sorry for the loss and asked Mrs. Edkins about the motives. Mr. Thomas, being rather independent, said she, sometimes even a little rash or quick (I am not English but German and must beg you to excuse me if I don't always express exactly) had retired in a discussion about trifles, with Mr. Muirhead, who might have been more yielding, thought she.

Your son came back to the Mission due to Peking in the winter 1865-1866. At that time, I saw the Edkins once or twice a week, and Mr. Thomas getting into a kind of intimacy with my son - Doctor to the French Legation - I saw a good deal of his ways. They were perfectly evangelical. There was then - and I think there is still - in the Chapel joining the London Missionary establishment

a daily and regular preaching from 10 in the morning till 4 in the afternoon. Between 50 - 100 Chinese, changing now and then, sat listening the Gospel, some patiently, some earnestly, everyone decent while coming sitting or going. Besides these daily evangelical exercises, there was Divine Service in three different Chapels on Sabbath. At these preachings were afforded only Mr. Edkins, your son and several Chinese catechists. It is a fact that they had more than all the other Missionaries, of different Societies, five or six, together. Ten of these numerous listeners accepted the Gospel, but those who did were brought in by the means of your son as well as by Mr. Edkins and the native Catechists.

It frequently happens with us to hear that such a one has been converted by the preaching of such a minister or the reading of such a book, or the words of such a pious man. Never have I heard of anything of this kind in Peking, though I have been told about many individual conversions. Whenever the first stirring cause mentioned it was the reading of the Scriptures or some Christian book. Don't they analyse their feelings as we do? Or are they more influenced by the truth itself written in intolerable Chinese than by the most eloquent preacher who, I dare say, is but a poor Chinese scholar to their fastidious ears? I mention this in answer to Mr. Edkins' question: whether I recollect of any instance of particular usefulness to tell you about your son. Were I asked the same question about Mr. Edkins, I couldn't quote one case where a Chinese confessed that his heart had been awakened by him, and yet many of them have frequently told me, in a general way, that he is a good man. Nothing more. While as I feel and say with enthusiasm that he is

the best man I ever knew. And then he has been the means and he alone, of the first conversions, he formed and instructed - and does so still - the native catechists, he established the first Christian school in Peking, he keeps the work up, quiet, faithful amidst great difficulties.

But, your own son, too, has been very useful, there is no doubt. And in course of time he would have been so more and more because of some particular qualities to win the Chinese. They are very particular in many things. The lowest peasant in the fields is not always willing to answer a stranger's questions about the road or so, if it is not preceded by asking the man's "honourable home", his "precious age", and so forth. Every missionary knows these rules of Chinese etiquette, but few will mind them. Your son, did. On the other hand, they expect in a gentleman that kind of dignified quietness which is the stamp of education in Europe. Your son was in full possession of these qualities; he told me that he studied them, as most important, in Mr. Edkins, but they were natural to him. His extraordinary talent for languages showed a quick observation of other people's ways, and the facility to make them his own. In two instances, Mr. Thomas' tact quite astonished my son. He was now and then taking photographs, as amateur. Your son proposed him the portrait of Toah-Sheng (Buddha living). This man is looked at by the lower classes as an incarnation of Buddha. Some high Mandarins, in a friendly conversation with one of our French interpreters, compared him to the Pope with the difference, said they, that the Pope is elected by the priests and independent, while our Government chooses the child to be Toan-Sheng after the death of the present, which makes him dependent. At any rate, Toah-Sheng is a high official,

almost a Deity, and as much as I know there are no strangers in Peking who came near him, except once, some Roman Catholic Missionaries together with the gentlemen of the French Legation, during and after a Buddhist ceremony. How Mr. Thomas had found his way to him, I don't know, but he had introduced my son, who took the man's photograph, and was highly pleased by the friendly tone of Mr. Thomas' intercourse with Toah-Sheng. Another day, Mr. Thomas proposed my son, also for photographics, to take him to the Temple of Heaven, the entrance of which was, at that time, forbidden to strangers. They got easily in, but soon after they were disturbed by some Mandarins of that kind, which can't be bought by some dollars. They were in a perfect wrath. Well, Mr. Thomas talked so much and so well, he was so polite and so dignified, that he quite soothed the Chinese gentlemen and parted with them in the most friendly way. This knowledge of Chinese language and etiquette might have given him by and by an opening in high society, which no missionary in Peking, at least, has been trying yet. As it were, it became the cause of the last deciding event of his life.

Nine Roman Catholic Missionaries had been murdered in Corea. M. de Bellonet, French Charge d'affaires in Peking was immediately determined to punish the offence, and invited Admiral Rose, then at Chefoo, to sail without delay. One missionary only had escaped, beside him there was no interpreter. M. Lemaine, first interpreter to the French Legation, suggested your son as one who might be highly useful; he had been in Corea, knew the language and was fitted for the affair because of those qualities just now mentioned, and which his Peking friends so well knew and appreciated in him.

The Missionaries in Peking, of five different boards,

have established a rule according to which they decide by vote or persuasion, every important question. In this occurrence, Mr. Edkins told me there were two against. One, an American by political antipathy (this was my idea, not Mr. Edkins, it was at the time of the Mexican bitterness), the other, Mr. Edkins said, because it was for a Roman Catholic interest. There I gave a start. "Do you prefer Buddhists to Roman Catholics, and won't you ally with them who are so cruelly offended? Unless you are against any kind of War". "That is my own view," replied Mr. Edkins. "We have another meeting to-night and I think we'll bring the two opponents round." So they did, with difficulty or without, I don't know. Most probably they considered a missionary interest besides the humane one, to assist their Christian brethren, the Roman Catholics.

The Koreans are tributaries to the Chinese government and a great number of them are staying every winter in Peking. Individually, they seem good-natured, confident and more disposed to familiarity with strangers than the Chinese, those who read Chinese are glad to accept Christian books. Your son had been sent, in 1865, to Korea for the study of the language, had he not? So the Peking missionaries thought perhaps that another stay in Korea might give him some advantage for the opening of the Gospel. But, I repeat it, this is my own supposition. I never was told nor enquired about the final meeting for the subject.

I knew by M. Lemaire, our French interpreter, that M. de Bellonet was very happy to secure Mr. Thomas and that he wished to settle immediately the pecuniary appointment. Mr. Thomas objected that this ^{was} the Missionary establishment's business, not his; he also

refused any advance of money for the voyage expenses - Mr. Edkins joined a young native skilled in map-drawing.

Some days after their departure from Peking, we too left and met your son at Cien Czin waiting for sailing conveniences. A week after, the French Consul of that place, communicated to your son a letter from M. de Bellonet who informed him that there was no more occasion for Mr. Thomas' going to Chefoo in order to join Admiral Rose who had left for Laigon. Mr. Thomas thought these news inexact, so did we. "I have an idea, said he, to go at any rate to Chefoo. There is a man who owes me some money which I'll never have without going myself and which is more than the voyage expenses. What do you think?" We joined his view. My son, being persuaded that the expedition would take place calculated how much Mr. Thomas' individuality would suit the Admiral whom he had known in Peking. I didn't think of that, but I recollected some words of Dr. Mullens who said - in Mr. Edkins' parlour in Peking, September or October 1865 - that Missionaries are sometimes too apt to think themselves necessary for the work they are at, that they hesitate to offer to take a change when they really want it, and that when they have had it, they come back so much more capable and valuable. I knew that Mr. Edkins always find means for the work he has at hand, and in this case, he had settled things for a long absence of Mr. Thomas. Let the young men follow his natural desire for moving, thought I. So he went. Some days after we too sailed for Chefoo on our way home. Mr. Thomas had kindly secured a house and boarding for our party, my son, my daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, besides myself; he came on board the steamer and took us down. Then he told us what we thought at Cien Czin Admiral Rose was expected back and had left orders for the expedition.

A fortnight after this, your son called and told me that he was going to Corea without waiting for Admiral Rose who was certain to come and would be glad to find his way prepared by such enquiries as Mr. Thomas could get. "You'll excuse me if I don't tell you by what ship I was sailing". This was said very politely but in that decided tone which admits no gainsaying. Alas! I never saw him again. Many months after, I read here, in a French paper, the frightful news. I was very sick at the time, and had the most melancholy leisure to fancy and picture out the probable scenes of the cruel event. Nor did I shrink from it. Bitter has been his pang, but short we may think and Jesus was by to comfort him in this dark valley of death, that we must hope. His promises are Amen. As far as human eye can see, your son did love the Lord, he did serve Him - so we may be sure that he has reached a blessed home, while we are still striving against and suffering from sin. Thy Will be done ! Our better and though happy day will come too, at last. One word more. We were told at Shanghai, three weeks or so after the sailing of the "General Sherman" that she was a smuggler. I think this is true, because Mr. Thomas didn't wish to tell me what ship he was sailing by; he felt that I would have been against. But I am sorry to say-smuggling is so general in China that it is little thought of. I asked a Shanghai merchant "To be sure you don't smuggle". "Indeed I do, every one does". He blushed though. I knew it is so. Even Christian people are influenced by the bad moral atmosphere they are breathing in. The well known Chinese missionary, Gutzlaff, has been taking advantage, in his time, of opium vessels. He sailed by and when the Captain and crew went on shore for their business, he did his, namely, distributing the Scriptures and preaching the Gospel. I saw this fact in "The Middle Kingdom" by Dr. Wells S.

Williams, formerly a Missionary at Canton, now Secretary to the United States Legation in Peking. Had it pleased the Lord to spare your son's life and give him success in spreading the Gospel in Corea, twenty years hence no one would inquire how he went there, but his name would be glorified, as Gutschlaff's is now. He came indeed a fortnight after, and has been to Corea.

Happy we are that men don't judge us but the Lord, or rather that the blood of Christ washes away our sins, and your son's perhaps too. Those who have known him will always keep a kind and interesting souvenir.

Please, my dear Sir, accept my deep felt sympathy and let me hope that my letter has brought a slight comfort to your wounded heart.

(Sgd) Pauline Morache,

November 1st.

Our readers will not have forgotten the voyage of the General to Corea and the reputed destruction of that vessel and all on board by the outraged inhabitants. Information has been now received, which will go far to remove this impression, as tending to show that two at least of the ill-fated crew still survive. A few evenings ago, a letter written in Chinese was thrown into the compound of Messrs. Ferguson & Co. and on its being opened, appeared to be a letter from the Corea, saying that two Europeans - one of them Mr. Thomas and the other a pilot were alive and well, and that they were very well treated. The letter was taken to the English Consul, and he, finding there was a Corean junk in harbour, ordered the master to be brought before him, when the latter confessed he had brought the letter from the Corea and thrown it into Messrs. Ferguson's compound. It is supposed that the letter was written with the cognizance of the gaoler in order to reassure Mr. Thomas's friends; but the letter, if it be genuine, deprecates interference as likely to ensure his death".

KOREA AND THE KOREAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH

BY

DR E. MERVYN ROSSER, M.B., B.S., (Lond.) M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., M.R.C.G.P.

Korea, or Chosen as the Japanese renamed it, means "The Land of the Morning Calm". It was also called the "Hermit Nation" until 1882 due to the fact that the Korean people refused to ratify a treaty with any Occidental country.

Geographically, it lies between parallels 34° and 43° North. It is a little larger than Great Britain. The northern boundary is the Yalu River which separates the country from Manchuria. The country is a peninsula stretching from Manchuria down toward Japan with the Sea of Japan on the east and southern coasts, the Korean Straits, 120 miles wide, separating the southern tip of the peninsula from Japan, and the Yellow Sea on the west which separates the country from China. It is situated between the three great Far Eastern Empires of China, Russia and Japan. This accounts for its strategic importance being situated on the crossroads of the Far East much as Palestine is in the Middle East, so that throughout the centuries the land has been coveted by each of its powerful neighbours. Its present day importance internationally is that the way for the Russian and Chinese Communists to approach America is down through South Korea, then on to Japan, thus exposing America.

The country consists of innumerable hills with corresponding valleys, much of which is taken up by rice paddies. The mountain ranges which run roughly north and south are partially covered with stunted pines and brush which are collected by the Korean farmers for fuel. The north is said to be more hilly than the south and is more industrialised. Here are found hydro-electric works, gold and coal mines - roughly a third of the population is in the north. North of the 38th parallel is, of course, still under Communist rule. The south is mainly agricultural; the climate is rather warmer than in the north and the rainfall is greater. The south is ruled by the 'Republic of Korea' National Assembly under President _____, with the help of the United Nations. The coast line is very irregular and stretches for about 1,700 miles. There are numerous islands situated close to the main land. The capital of South Korea is Seoul and the Communist capital of North Korea is Pyengyang.

The Korean people are typically Oriental, that is, with the Mongolian type of features and have usually black or dark brown hair; they resemble the Chinese and Japanese peoples. It is estimated that there are 5,000,000 Koreans north of the 38th parallel at present and 22,000,000 south. Many refugees fled from the north to the south following the Communist invasion. There are roughly 60,000 foreigners in the country mostly Chinese.

Korea has a legendary civilisation stretching back to 2,000 years B.C. It has an authentic history of 1122 B.C. when King Kijah entered Korea from China and established a kingdom in the north. He it was who first called the country Chosen, or "The Land of the Morning Calm". He introduced to the Koreans literature, Oriental medicine, and arts of the Chinese civilisation. Two other kingdoms occupied the centre and the south of the peninsula at this time. The Koreans are temperamentally an emotional race and inter-tribal wars with invasions from China and Japan fill up the centuries. In 1392 the peninsula became united under the one kingdom 'Chosen', under the nominal protectorate of China. Korea then became closed to all outside nations except the Chinese for hundreds of years and hence earned the name of "The Hermit Kingdom". In 1895 Korea became independent but as a result of the war between China and Japan the independence was threatened by Russia. In 1905 when Japan defeated Russia, Japan declared a protectorate over Korea. In 1910 the Japanese annexed Korea. During the next few decades a half a million Japanese came to reside in Korea, mostly as administrators or merchants. The Koreans were severely subjugated at this time. In 1945 at the capitulation of Japan all the Japanese were forced to leave Korea so that to-day no Japanese are found in the peninsula except, perhaps, for a few fishermen.

85 per cent of the Korean people are farmers. They live in agricultural villages consisting of anything from 20 to 200 or more huts and houses. The dwelling places consist of mud walls with thatched or tiled roofs and oil papered floors. No furniture is found in the living rooms. The doors consist of sliding rice papered partitions. They have a characteristic method of under the floor heating which was probably introduced from the cold northern most parts of China. The heat from the fire is drawn through flues under the oil papered floors which heats the house very effectively. The honoured guest squats on the hottest part of the shiny floor. At night the family sleeps on the warm floor. The staple diet is, of course, rice as in so many of these Far Eastern lands. Korean rice is said to be the best rice in the

world and has a characteristic sweet taste. Other crops which are grown are corn, wheat, beans, barley and millet. Fish is also widely eaten; after the fish has been caught by the fishermen along the coasts they are slit and allowed to dry in the sun before being sold in the shops. There are numerous fishing villages scattered along the coast line. One of the characteristic Korean foods is known as kimchi. This is composed of pickled turnip flavoured with red peppers left to ferment in large porcelain jars in the yards and is very hot to the palate. They draw their water from village wells. The farmers have primitive methods of agriculture, that is oxen, wooden ploughs for planting, hand transplanting and cutting of rice. There is also a silk worm industry in the land. The Koreans have an unusual literary ability and Oriental scholars delight in their poems.

The seasons are similar to Great Britain in time. However, July is the rainy season when it might rain for days on end. August is hot and humid when the missionaries take their summer vacations on the coast. The winters tend to be colder than in Britain. Springtime is very beautiful indeed and they have a similar blossom time to Japan; autumn is also a beautiful time of the year.

They have characteristic national costumes. The men wear long white cotton cloaks and black horse-hair hats. They wear rubber or rice straw shoes. The men do their hair up in little knots on top of their heads and have been termed the "top-knots" because of this - these knots can be seen through the transparent horse-hair hats. The women wear full length skirts and short jackets. The girls wear coloured silks. White is the colour of mourning in Korea. The school children all wear uniforms which were introduced by the Japanese. The boys wear navy-blue with peaked caps and the girls wear white blouses and navy-blue tunics as in so many schools in this country. Shoes are never worn indoors and have no laces so they can be easily kicked off on entering a home. They wear white cotton socks padded with wool to keep their feet warm in the wintertime.

Architecturally the country is characterised by fascinating curved roofs made of tiles unique to Korea. The best architecture is seen in the Korean palaces Royal tombs and city gates. Western type buildings are built by the Japanese are seen in some of the larger cities.

The Koreans have their own phonetic alphabet consisting of 23 letters and all the Christian missionary work is carried out with this simple Korean alphabet. However, numerous Chinese characters are used by the more learned Koreans who tend to despise the simple alphabet.

Western medicine was introduced by the missionaries. When a patient is admitted to a Korean hospital a friend or member of the family moves in to look after the patient. If one is not careful the whole family might attempt to move into the hospital. There are a few missionary hospitals and leper colonies.

The oldest religion in Korea is Shamanism, or spirit worship. Spirits are believed to dwell in the hills, streams and houses and offerings are made to them. Buddhism was introduced into Korea in the 4th century and was carried into Japan in 552 B.C. by Korean missionaries. Stately temples with images of Buddha are found in the mountains. Confucianism became the state religion when the peninsula was under the one kingdom of Chosen in 1392 A.D. Shintoism, the state religion of Japan, was introduced by the Japanese when they annexed Korea in 1910 but the Koreans tore all the Shinto shrines down when the Japanese were forced to leave. However, since the introduction of the Christian faith 75 years ago these older religions have largely tended to regress.

The large part of Protestant missionary work during this time has been done by the Northern and Southern Presbyterian and Methodist churches. Organised Protestant mission work began with the arrival of Dr H. E. Allen and wife of the American Presbyterian Mission North, who arrived on the field in 1884. They were joined the following year by the Rev H. G. Underwood and Dr and Mrs J. W. Heron of the same mission, and by the Rev H. G. Appenzeller and Dr W. B. Scranton and their wives of the Board of Foreign Missions of the American Methodist Episcopal Church. Work was commenced in Seoul and extended through itinerating journeys from the capital. The Salvation Army Oriental Missionary Society, Seventh Day Adventists and Anglican churches also have flourishing work in Korea. However, 20 years before the first American missionaries arrived in Korea the first Protestant missionary and martyr to Korea was the Rev Robert Jermaine Thomas who was ordained in his father's church, Hanover Congregational Church near Abergavenny in South Wales. He sailed for Shanghai, China, in July 1863 under the LMS. The following year his wife died in tragic circumstances. He decided to travel to Korea on an American trading schooner "The General Shermann" but as they sailed up the Daidong River toward Pyengyang, the northern capital, the schooner was stranded on the mud flats and set alight by the hostile Koreans. All the members of the ship were executed as they landed but Thomas was able to distribute a number of Gospels printed in Chinese before his execution. Through reading these a number of Koreans believed and became Christians which accounted for the fact that a dozen

or so Korean Christians were found in Korea by the first American missionaries. Thomas's heroic action in taking the Christian Gospel to Korea is well known in the Korean Church today. There is a Thomas memorial church at Pyengyang. Also about this time the Revs. John Ross and John Macintyre, pioneer missionaries of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland Mission, working in Manchuria translated the Gospel of Luke into the Korean Language which was taken across the Yalu River into Korea by converts from Manchuria, as Korea remained closed to Westerners. Previous to this there had been terrible massacres of Roman Catholic priests and converts when it was estimated that 10,000 people lost their lives.

At present there are roughly a million Korean Christians out of a population of about 25 million. The Christians meet in their churches for dawn prayer meetings at 5 a.m. 70 per cent of the Christians are Presbyterian who are conservative Evangelical and Calvinistic in their theology. There are roughly 3,000 churches in South Korea today. The Korean Christians are self-sacrificing and often give much more than a tenth of their income or belongings to the church. The phenomenal growth of the Christian Church can be traced to two main facts.

Firstly, in 1907 there was a nationwide revival commencing at the 700 strong annual autumn meeting of the Korean Christians and missionaries for Bible study and prayer in Pyengang. During the preceding year there had been much prayer among the missionaries and Koreans for revival. Soon after the Gospel spread throughout the whole of Korea. The Christian Church has flourished ever since in the face of much opposition. Before the recent war there was again a time of revival and during the Communist occupation 450 Korean ministers were murdered by the Communists. Secondly, the introduction from the beginning of the Nevius method of missionary work as worked out by the Rev. John L. Nevius 40 years a missionary to the Chinese in Chefoo, China. This is to produce an indigenous Church by (1) self supporting, that is a Church only comes into existence when the local native population is able to provide a building and support a minister - the church may start in a Korean home and later move to an independent building. Missionaries help to found new churches and may act as co-pastors until they are established but the local church does not depend upon foreign mission funds. (2) Self governing, which means that no missionaries are ordained in the Korean church but that all ordained ministers are Koreans. In 1912 the Presbyterian Church of Korea

was established dividing the country up into 20 presbyteries. (3) The church is self propagating - that is, the individual Korean Christians have a zeal for the salvation of their fellow Koreans. Church members used to pledge to give so many days a year to itinerating evangelistic journeys of preaching and distributing Gospel literature. The missionaries have always laid emphasis on Bible study and prayer. The Seminary of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea is situated on South Mountain in Seoul and has about 500 students. A branch of the Evangelical Library in London exists in this Seminary. Koreans who profess to believe are only baptised after one year's instruction, and living a consistent Christian life. It is considered sufficient cause to exercise church discipline through failure to observe the Sabbath, or attend church regularly. There is a deep earnestness among the Korean Christians; the churches are crowded. That is a great inspiration and encouragement to attend their meetings.

A Korean Broadcasting Station was opened in 1953 to broadcast the Gospel to the whole of Korea - i.e. including those under Communist domination north of the 38th parallel. It was always a great joy to visit the 'Young Nak' or 'Bethany' Presbyterian church in Seoul. The minister is Dr. Kyung Chic Han, a Princeton University graduate in the days of Dr. J. Gresham Meacham. This flourishing church has two consecutive Sunday morning services of about 1,500 to 2,000 people, with an early morning Sunday School of 1,000 children. There are 100 deacons and 100 deaconesses who regularly visit the parishioners instructing and exhorting them. The Koreans have been called the Welsh of the East, and have very beautiful hymn singing in their churches. There are a few missionary hospitals. At the American Presbyterian Hospital at Taegu Dr. Kenneth Scott is the brother of Betty Stam who was a martyr of the China Inland Mission.

There was a remarkable response to the preaching of the Gospel in North Korean Communist prisoner-of-war camps and Chinese prisoner-of-war camps in South Korea by a few American missionaries. 150 of these former Communists are now studying in the Biblical Seminaries of South Korea to enter the Christian Church.

Korea was again ravaged by the Chinese Communists and United Nation Armies sweeping through the land in the early part of 1950 leaving much desolation, many war widows and orphans. Although much has been accomplished there remains much more to be done.

Robert German Thomas: 1840-66.

Missionary under the LMS.

Born: 7 Sept. 1840 in Rhayader where his father was the Independent minister, before moving to Hanover, Monmouthshire. He was for a time a schoolmaster in Oundle, and then in 1856 he became a member of London University. He was a student at New College, London, and he graduated B.A. (London). He was ordained in 1863 and sailed to Shanghai. He visited Korea in 1865 and gained a very good mastery of the language. In 1866 he was chosen to care for the English-Chinese school in Peking, but soon afterwards he joined a group of adventurers to explore Korea and

They were captured by Koreans and they all were killed. He managed to throw a number of Bibles on the beach, and they had a great influence upon those who read them.

In 1931, a memorial ~~column~~ was erected near the spot where he died: the memorial was the Robert Jernain memorial Church.

Iran Dictionary of Welsh Biography:

Article by E. L. Evans, who also wrote a book -

Cymru a'r Gynddeithas Genhadol
(Wales & the Missionary Society).

(Hanaer is the name of a Congregational Church in Marmath.)

"Pyongyang Foreign trouble" - 1866

at Chefoo Mr. Thomas decided not to wait for the French Admiral, but to embark on the schooner "General Sherman", which was freighted for Korea + due to sail without any delay.

p. 113 On Aug. 9, Thurs The "G.S" w. Mr. Thomas + a complement of 23 men, officers + crew, left Chefoo.

p. 114 on their way to Korea they stopped at White Wings island. They anchored at Too-moo-jin. On hearing of the arrival of a foreign vessel at that place, the Mandarin in charge of this island ordered his garrison to attack them. But Mr. Thomas...

p. 119 - official seal of Chief of Police taken from him.

Rhodes, destroyed in the river opp Py
Sept. 2nd

Extract from "THE HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND"
PART I. 1809-1900 by the Rev. G. A. Frank Knight, D.D., F.R.S.E.
(in bound typescript form only, never printed.)

"... In the spring of 1869 Williamson performed another journey from Chefoo through Shantung and Kiangsu to Nankin.

"By 1868 it was clear that the work was expanding so amazingly that one man could not overtake it. China's vast distances, and its myriads of persons who in every province were clamouring for the Word, demanded that Williamson should have a colleague and assistant. The Directors therefore appointed Robert Lilley of Inverkip, who sailed to Chefoo, and after being trained by Williamson, took over the duties while the latter came home for a well-earned furlough. In the six years of initial work he had circulated 22,175 Bibles and Testaments, and 60,555 Portions. In eleven main journeys, through a territory almost as large as Europe, he had thus placed 82,730 Scriptures in the hands of men and women, most of whom had also heard from his lips the story of redeeming love. On his return home, he published an account of his remarkable experiences in two volumes "Journeys in North China, Manchuria, and Eastern Mongolia", and not long after his geographical, scientific, and literary discoveries were recognized by the bestowal on him of the degree of LL.D. by the University of Glasgow.

"In 1865 the Society's long continued connection with KOREA was begun. At that period Korea was a Hermit Kingdom, permitting no stranger to enter its sacred soil. For 2000 years, its people, numbering some 15 millions, had been successful in sealing their country from all external influences. But now the work of opening Korea began with the martyrdom of the first NBSS Agent to enter with the Word of God. While Williamson was awaiting at Chefoo the arrival of a steamer from Peking, there came into the harbour a junk from Korea on board of which two Koreans were concealed who, at the risk of being executed on their return if found out, had ventured across the Strait to Shantung for purposes of trade. Through a friend Williamson was introduced to the two strangers, who spent some hours in his house. It turned out that they were Roman Catholics, and hidden in their dresses they carried rosaries, crucifixes, and medals attesting their Church membership. In conversation they expressed belief in Christ, and stated that they tried to lead good lives. When a blessing was asked before tea, one of them offered prayer in Korean, and they appeared to be ignorant of any distinction between Protestantism and Romanism. They said there were in Korea 50,000 of the same faith: that they had no temples, but worshipped in private houses.

- Rev. Alexander Williamson, NBSS Agent in China

"Just at this time there happened to be in Chefoo a missionary of the LMS, Robert J. Thomas, who at once resolved to return to Korea with the two visitors. The master of the junk consented to take him across as a passenger and later to convey him to the shore of Manchuria whence he would return by way of Peking. Williamson arranged that Thomas should act as the NBSS Agent: \$100 was granted for the costs: and soon Thomas sailed for the Hermit Land with a large stock of Bibles. By successfully disguising himself he was able to mix with many Korean traders and peasants who offered, if he should return next year, to conduct him to Seoul, the capital: and he circulated a considerable number of Bibles which would find their way along the west coast. He also compiled a Korean vocabulary, to some extent learned the Korean language, and by studying the coast line he was qualified to act as a pilot along the whole shore from Hwang-hai northwards to the Manchuria border.

"Next year (1866), however, a tragedy took place. News came of a furious uprising of the Koreans against the R.C. converts, large numbers of whom were massacred including two bishops and some priests, the murders being instigated by the father of the King. (5) In revenge for the massacre of the priests, a French Admiral was despatched to punish the Koreans. Thomas, in his eagerness to return to Korea to introduce further Scriptures, was induced to embark on the 'General Sherman'. The vessel sailed up the Taidong River, and at every stopping place he preached to the Koreans and distributed Chinese Scriptures. But when the ship grounded on a sandbank as the tide receded, the natives lit a fire-raft upstream and sent it down on the stranded foreign vessel which was soon a mass of flames. All who attempted to escape were massacred. Thomas on the deck of the burning ship opened his cases of Bibles, and with all his might flung the Books to those who lined both banks of the stream. As the heat grew more intense, he took a Bible in his hand and holding it aloft amid the flames, he prayed aloud that God by his death would open a way whereby the Scriptures might find entrance into the Closed Land. Then with his clothes on fire, he leaped overboard on to a sandbank, and his last act was to hand a Bible to his murderer who transfixed him with a lance. In the very crisis of his martyrdom he thrust the Word of God into the hands of the very men who slew him, and then sank down in death. Such was the terrible mode in which the Scriptures found their way into this Hermit Kingdom.

"Though it is anticipating what took place much later, it may be well to outline here what were the fruits of this martyrdom. Did God hear and answer the prayer of this dying confessor, and zealous spreader of the Word? It is stated by eye-witnesses that

(5) The number of those who thus lost their lives is stated to have been at least 10,000.

'some representatives of the Government went down the river, and collected and destroyed all the Gospels they could find: but they could not erase from men's minds the eager face of God's messenger, neither could they find and destroy all the Books. Some were hidden and read and became good seed in fertile ground. To-day, the Taidong River is lined with churches, and there are over 25 churches in Pyengyang City.'

"The son of the man who murdered Thomas is the leading elder in the Presbyterian Church. On the banks of the river where the 'General Sherman' was burned stands a spacious Church, over the front door of which hangs the anchor chain of the ship. Inside the Church is a tablet in three languages - Korean, Chinese and English - bearing this inscription:-

"To the Glory of God, given of Salvation
 through His Son Jesus Christ,
 And in grateful memory of the Rev. Robert Jermain
 Thomas, B.A.,
 An Agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland,
 Who, while introducing the Scriptures into Korea
 Gave his life near the spot on which this church
 is erected.

This stone is placed in this Church by the Directors
 of the National Bible Society of Scotland, 1932.

'The blood of the martyrs is the Seed of the Church.'

THOMAS MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

PYENGYANG, KOREA

DR. S. A. MOFFETT, PRES.
MR. M. W. OH, SEC.
MR. HUGH MILLER, TREAS.

June 3, 1950.

Dr. Sidney Berry,
Secretary,
Congregational Church Offices,
London, England.

Dear Sir:-

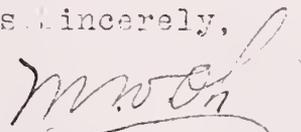
The letter I enclose herewith will tell you a story about the late Rev. Robert Jermain Thomas and the Thomas Memorial Association.

According to the records of the London Missionary Society, Mr. Thomas was a member of the Congregational church, Hanover, Warrington-shire, in the year 1854, of which his father, Rev. Robert Thomas, was pastor. Although I did not know the present pastor's name, ^{of the church} I wrote to him twice to know Mr. Thomas' early life from the church records. But I have not received any words from him and the letters did not return. I wonder if there is a pastor in the church now.

We are going to publish a full life of Mr. Thomas in English. So both his and his father's life in England are needed. Would you be kind enough to let me know the pastor's name, if there is, and to let me have the materials on their lives within the line of your possibilities? Anything you can do to help me on this line will be appreciated. I want, also, the names of the pastors of the Congregational churches in Dundee and Rhyader.

With kindest regards, I remain,

Yours sincerely,


Secretary.

THOMAS MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

R. S. A. McFFETT, PRES.

R. M. W. CHOI, SEC.

R. HUGH MILLER, TREAS.

PYENGYANG, KOREA

Dec. 17, 1927

Dear Fellow Missionaries:-

As you know, the late Rev. Robert Jermain Thomas was not only the first Protestant missionary to Korea, but also the only Protestant martyr. He came first to Korea in 1865 as the agent of the National Bible Society of Scotland and scattered many Chinese Bibles along the coast of Whanghai Province. In the following year 1868, he came again on board an American schooner, the "General Sherman", as a representative of the London Missionary Society with a stock of Chinese Bibles of the National Bible Society of Scotland. While he was coming up the Taedong river he tossed about five hundred copies of the Bible to the crowds on the bank. Finally he lost his life with the crew of the ill-fated "General Sherman" on September 4th of that year, but he persuaded many people to receive his Bibles, tossed them ashore to the crowds, and gave one copy before he died to the soldier who killed him, carrying on his mission to the last.

Success? Failure? The blood which ran from his body dyed the water red and the smoke from his Bibles was only a fine sight to the people on the banks. It seemed that all his plans had ended in smoke. If he had stayed at his work in China, he might have done excellent work, but the Almighty, who sees all things from the beginning, planned otherwise. After twenty-five years, among the people who received his Bibles, have come a number of believers and they have helped to lay the foundations of the Korean Church. It is worthy of special note that the banks of the Taedong river have become the center of Christianity in Korea. The first Protestant Church of Pyongyang was founded just inside of the East Gate where the chain of the "General Sherman" is still preserved. The first Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Korea was organized here in 1907; the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea was formed here in 1910; and both the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Korea and the Union Christian College were founded here.

Mr. Thomas gave his life while preaching the Gospel to this people and he was the forerunner of our work in Korea. We who are treading in his footsteps should plan some kind of memorial to him. In September last year, Mr. Oh Moon Than published a pamphlet in memory of Mr. Thomas and called attention to his martyrdom at the General Assembly which met in Pyongyang. Last spring a number of people in or near Pyongyang met and talked over the question of a memorial. It was decided to hold an open air service on the spot where he is buried now and this was done on May 8th last. On May 21st a number of us agreed to form the Thomas Memorial Association which has three objects: first, to publish the life of Mr. Thomas; second, to build a memorial church building near his tomb; and third, to raise a

THOMAS MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

DR. S. A. MOFFETT, PRES.

MR. M. W. CH, SEC.

MR. HUGH MILLER, TREAS.

PYENGYANG, KOREA

fund to carry on his purpose in evangelistic work. The Thomas Memorial Association decided two things last summer: first, to ask the General Assembly that all the Presbyterian churches in Korea should make an offering for the memorial; second, to ask all the missionaries in Korea to contribute to it. The General Assembly, which met in Wonsan last autumn, decided unanimously that all the churches should make an offering on the 30th of October and elected twenty men as Presbytery Committees, one from each Presbytery, to assist in this work. They are now collecting money from the churches.

In behalf of the Thomas Memorial Association we are asking you to contribute to this memorial to the forerunner of our work. We need 60,000 yen in all, 10,000 yen for the Memorial Church building and 50,000 yen as an endowment for the mission work in the name of Mr. Thomas. Mr. Thomas came here to preach the Gospel to this people. In accord with his desire, we are going to send missionaries to the still unevangelized territories in Korea and Manchuria. We hope you will assist in every way to make the memorial to Mr. Thomas a success. For your information we are sending the names of the officers of our association and of the Presbytery Committees. For more detailed information regarding Mr. Thomas' martyrdom, please read Rev. F. E. Hamilton's article in the September number of the Korea Mission Field for this year. The treasurer of our association is Mr. Hugh Miller of Seoul to whom you may send all contributions.

Yours most sincerely,

Samuel A. Moffett, Chairman
M. W. Ch, Secretary

Blomswayle, ¹¹ Oberhausen, 70

W. Chamberlin

14 NOV 1929. Nov. 1929.

Dear Sir,

I met the Sec^y of Hanover in Aberystwyth.
He sent you letter of inquiry about Rev R^d German Thomas,
the late Rev. Robert Thomas of Hanover. I send you the account
of him in Dr^s Rees & Thomas' History of the Welsh Church.

Yours ever truly,

D. Davies (Llanidloes)

From Dr^s Rees and Thomas:—

Robert German Thomas, B.A., son of Rev. Robert Thomas,
vicar of Hanover, was born September the 7th, 1840, at Rhale,
Wales, where his father was then minister. He was received as a
member of Hanover Church when 15 years of age. For a year after this he
attended - master in Mr Alfred Hart's school at Cerrig, North
Wales. In his 16th year he matriculated at London University. Before
this he had been an excellent scholar, having spent 3 years under the learned
Rev. Mr. Williams at Blundown College, where he distinguished himself
in Latin, Greek and French. After matriculating at London University,
he resided at home, and began to preach. His first text was Hebrew 13.
"Be ye the same." The following year he was admitted to New
College, London, where he was a diligent student for 5 years, & won
the Scholarship. He also took his B.A. degree at London University.
In 1863, he was ordained at Hanover, to go out as a
missionary under the L.M.S. A month later he and his wife sailed
for Madagascar, where they landed safely in December. In March, 1864,
he died in premature childbirth. His death deeply affected him
mentally, so that he could not do anything for a time.

During a change of season, which rendered the recovery of his health he was appointed to the Peking station. While on his way, he was directed to undertake a long missionary tour thro' Corea. During his stay he set himself to learn the Corean language. He was the first Protestant missionary to enter Corea. The natives gave him a friendly reception. He expounded to them the nature of Christianity, and formed a favourable opinion of the fitness of that Country as a missionary field.

After the departure of the French missionaries by the Queen, in 1685, the high Admiral of the French fleet organized a punitive expedition against them, and as one of the Europeans in China, ^{and Mr. Thomas} understood the Corean language, he was permitted to join the expedition as interpreter. With that end in view he sailed from Peking to Chefoo, but not finding the fleet there, and being eager intent on visiting Corea in order to perfect his knowledge of its language, he took passage in an American vessel The General Sherman. When the vessel got anchored on the west shore, the Coreans came down and killed the crew & the passengers and among the rest Mr. Thomas. This foul deed is supposed to have taken place on the 24th of August, 1686. In this way came to a sudden end the career of one of the most promising missionaries ever sent out of Britain. Mr. Thomas's gifts as a linguist were surprising. Before leaving this Country, he had a competent knowledge of the principal European languages, & he was at home in China before acquiring a considerable acquaintance with the Chinese, and, as we have said, he had become quite familiar with Corean. If he had lived, it is likely that he would have been one of the world's great linguists, and so would have been of immense service to the cause of missions. But the great Ruler in his wisdom saw fit to call him to himself at the beginning of his active labours. As He is infinite in wisdom, if

is our part to be still and say, "It is the Lord; let them
do that which seemeth to them good."

Hoping that this little sketch (which is a translation from
Dr. Beecher's notes) will answer the end of your inquiries about the
Rev. Herman Dow, and promising to be of any further help I can,

Believe me

Yours truly

J. Davis.

Mr. Chamberlain.

Dr. Beecher's book is dated 1871.

R. J. Thomas - Letters

1. Jan. 12, 1866, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Peking
2. April 4, 1866, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Peking
3. Oct. 13, 1866, Joseph Elkins to "My dear Muller" Peking
4. Aug. 1, 1866, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Chefoo
5. April 4, 1866, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Peking
6. June 3, 1930, Mwoh to "Dear Sir. Pyeng yang"
7. Dec. 19, 1927, S. A. Moffett to "Dear Fellow Missionaries" Pyeng yang
8. Nov. 9, 1927, D. Davies to "Dear Sir."
9. March 22, 1864, Wm Muirhead to "My dear Brother" Shanghai
10. April 5, 1864, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Shanghai
11. May 15, 1864, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Shanghai
12. June 3, 1864, Arthur Tidman to "Dear Brother" London
13. Oct. 25, 1864, W. Muirhead _____ Shanghai
14. Dec. 8, 1864, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Shanghai
15. Dec. 16, 1864, Griffith John _____ Hankow
16. Dec. 20, 1864, Wm. Muirhead _____ Shanghai
17. Dec. 8, 1864, Robert Hart to "My dear Mr. Muirhead" _____
Generals' Office
18. Jan. 31, 1865, R. J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman" Chefoo
19. Feb. 8, 1865, Jonathan Lee _____ Tientsin

- 20. Jan. 25, 1865, Alexander Williamson to "My dear Sir," Chefoo
- 21. March 15, 1865, R.J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman," Chefoo
- 22. May 15, 1865, R.J. Thomas to " " " Chefoo
- 23. April 15, 1865, J. Henderson to "My dear Mr. Thomas,"
- 24. May 5, 1865, Crispith John to "My dear Thomas," Hankow
- 25. April 27, 1865, Wm Muirhead to "My dear Mr. Thomas," Shanghai
- 26. July 28, 1865, R.J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman," Chefoo
- 27. July 27, 1865, R.J. Thomas to "Sir," Chefoo
- 28. Aug. 26, 1865, Arthur Tidman to "Dear Brother," London X
- 29. Jan. 12, 1866, R.J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman," Peking
- 30. April 4, 1866, R.J. Thomas to "My dear Dr. Tidman," Peking
- 31. Aug. 1, 1866, " to "My dear Dr. Tidman," Chefoo
- 32. Sept. 10, 1866, Jonathan Lees _____ Peking
- 33. July 25, 1866, Joseph Edkins _____ Peking
- 34. Sept. 10, 1866, J. Edkins To "My dear Mullens," Peking
- 35. Oct. 13, 1866, " to "My dear Mullens," Peking
- 36. Dec. 10, 1866, Joseph Mullens To "My dear Mr. Thomas,"
- 37. May 13, 1867, Jonathan Lees _____ Tientsin

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