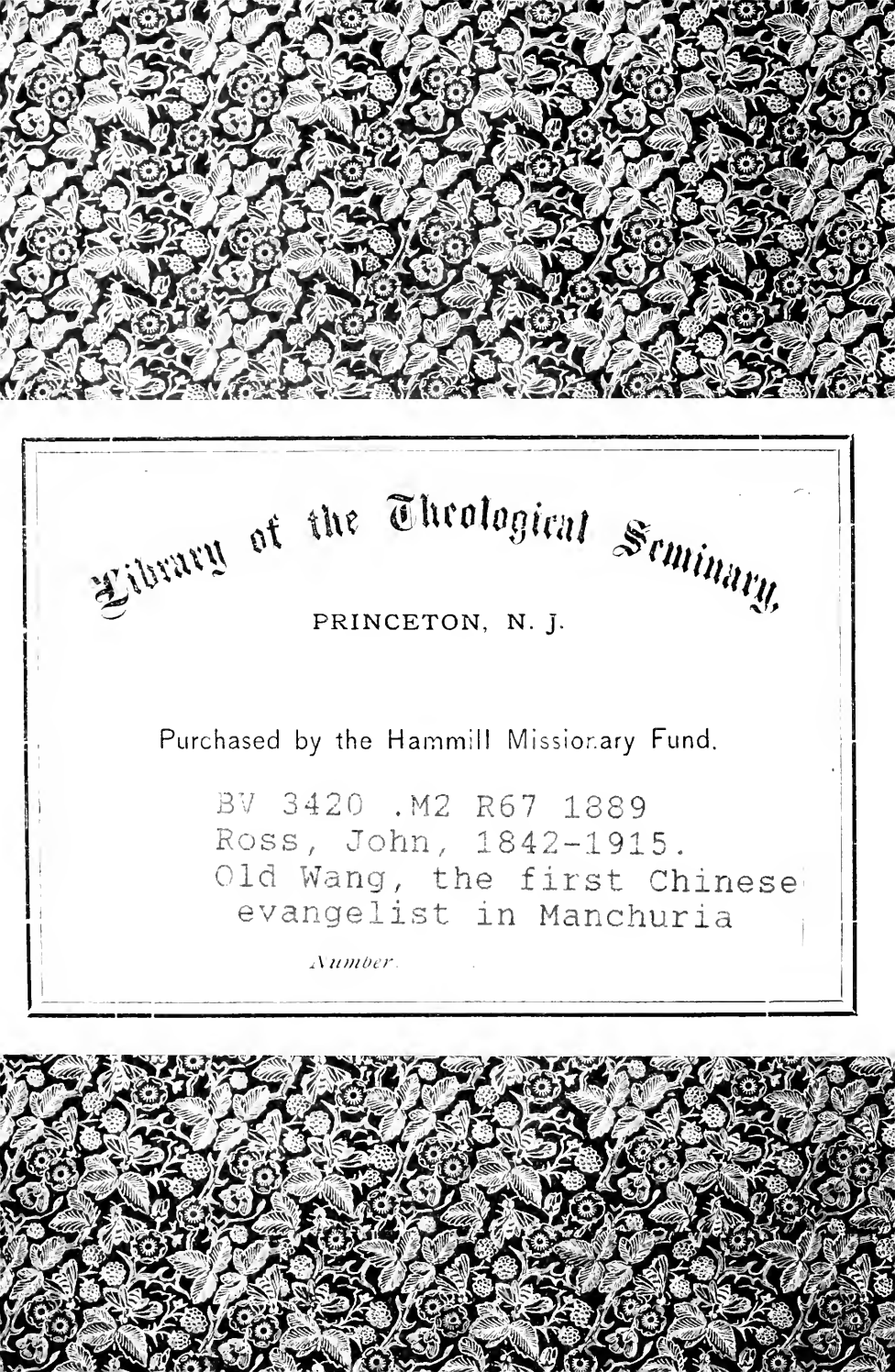


OLD WANG





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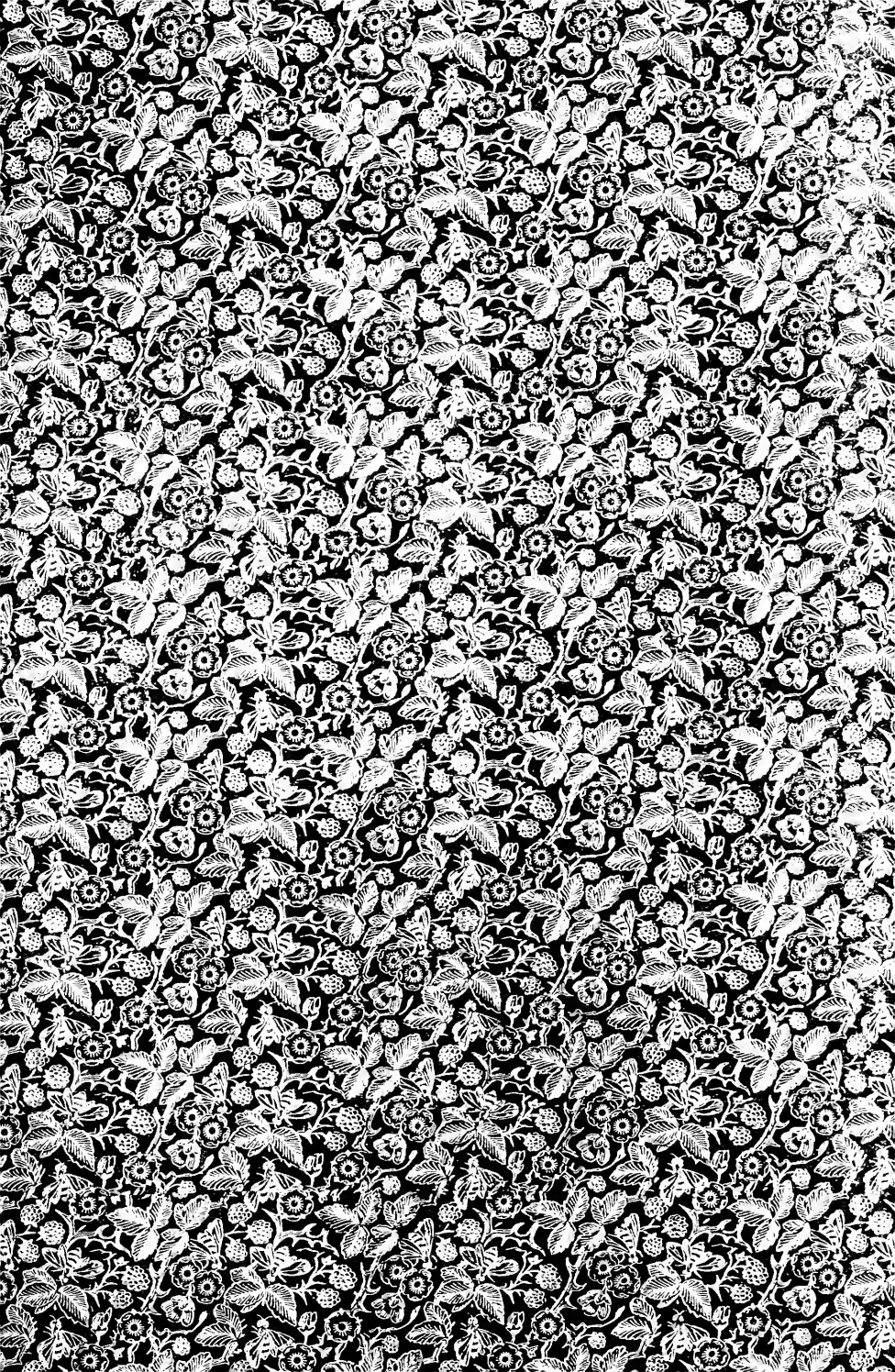
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Old Wang, the first Chinese
evangelist in Manchuria

Number.





OLD WANG, TOWARDS THE END OF HIS LIFE.

OLD WANG

THE FIRST CHINESE EVANGELIST IN MANCHURIA

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE AND WORK
WITH A CHAPTER UPON
NATIVE AGENCY IN CHINESE MISSIONS

BY

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MISSIONARY OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, MANCHURIA

WITH A PORTRAIT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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PREFACE.

THE Chinese Evangelist Wang Jingming died on the mission premises in Mookden, Manchuria, on September 24th, 1885. Having been the first member baptized, the first preacher set apart, and the first elder ordained by the writer, his life and experiences, even if of an ordinary kind, could not fail to be interesting to me personally. But as he may be called the virtual founder of Protestant Christianity in that extensive country known as Manchuria, it is believed that a sketch of his life, and some of the circumstances connected with his work, may be not merely worthy of passing notice, but deserving the interested attention and the careful study of all who are anxious to discover the best and speediest manner in which Christianity may be successfully proclaimed to the inaccessible millions of China.

Moreover, though books abound treating of missions in the abstract, the publication of a sketch like

the following may be the less inappropriate, as it serves to give readers some conception of what Christianity does for a man converted from the idolatry and freed from the vices of heathenism. It should be not only calculated to stimulate the interest of the Christian reader in work done for and by such men as Wang, but it should strengthen his own faith and encourage his own heart, when he thus sees that even in China, with its customs petrified by many centuries of idolatry, and steeped in ages of unquestioned superstition, which is propped up by a stubborn, conservative pride, the result of thousands of years of civilization, the Gospel is proving itself the 'power of God unto salvation,' just as in the lands of churches and Bibles.

There is still another reason which induces me to launch this little book upon the stream of literature which is flowing in ever-growing volume in this country. The comparatively few of the educated and moneyed classes who are interested in Christian missions must have been peculiarly moved by the meetings of the Missionary Conference held in London in June 1888, and by the manner in which these were treated by the powerful and omnivorous press of this Christian country. The obligations to the press under which both missionary and philan-

thropic labours rest are very great. The press has done much to spread knowledge and arouse enthusiasm. But it has hardly yet awakened to a due sense of the importance of these enterprises, and it devotes far too much space to unworthy subjects. For example, if a vile story oozes forth out of its native mud and offers itself to the public gaze, not a few papers at once greedily pounce upon and paint it in all its most disgusting details, and this is sometimes done by newspapers under the management of nominally Christian men. Whole pages are devoted to events or forecasts of events which pander to the gambling propensities of the people, few of which can be considered ennobling, many of them can be scarcely designated as honourable, and some of them are worthy of attention only as the occasions of modes of acquiring wealth which no really respectable man could commend for imitation. And yet these same newspapers either took no note of, or made but the scantiest reference to, meetings which were the outcome of agencies planned for the regeneration of the world, and agencies whose past successes remove from the regions of the chimerical their lively hopes for the future.

Now we must take for granted that if there were such interest taken by a considerable proportion of

readers in mission work and mission theories as in horse-racing, or football matches, newspapers would from self-interest give the former as much prominence as they do to the latter. And this general ignoring of, or contempt for, the most solemn of the commands of Him whom we all call 'Master' is therefore at its best but an index of extraordinary indifference, unaccountable on the supposition that all Christians know and are willing to do what as Christians is their duty. I cannot believe that any man 'calling himself Christian' would defiantly treat with contempt the last command of their Lord. I take it that either a careless disregard of a duty only dreamily acknowledged to be such, or an utter lack of interest in the object of that command, arising from an absence of any sense of responsibility for the state of their fellow-men, can account for this lamentable state of matters.

Possibly, if such Christians could have their interest in non-Christian countries increased, they would become alive to their duties towards them. And if they could be got to look face to face upon men of other nations who, like the subject of this book, have been converted by the agency of missions from heathenism to Christianity, and from godlessness to godliness, their present languid interest or

blank lack of interest would give place to an eager desire for, and hearty efforts towards the multiplication of, such missionary agencies. Is it too much to hope that the story of Old Wang may do its little to lead such Christian people to benefit themselves by taking a wider, more vital, and more palpable interest in the real welfare of their fellow-men of other climes, who, though of customs and speech different from their own, are ruled by the same fears, amenable to the same moral laws, and capable of entertaining and being benefited by the same hopes as ourselves?

JOHN ROSS.

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OLD WANG.

CHAPTER I.

BEFORE CONVERSION.

WANG JINGMING, or Wang the 'Luminous,' was born in a village not far from Peking. By a father's care he secured an education sufficient for commercial purposes. The lot of the peasant proprietor, of which class the landholders of China is mainly composed, is bearable in practical life only when the majority of the rising generation abandons the hoe and the plough for the shop or the handicrafts of the city. Hence, as the paternal inheritance of this family Wang was, like that of far the larger proportion of Chinese husbandmen, but a tiny patrimony, he at an early age wandered forth in quest of other than agricultural means of rising in life.

His efforts with this end in view were more varied than successful. As the private follower of a high mandarin, he learned how, without wages or perquisites, to keep a good table and clothe himself in silks. Among the beautiful and richly auriferous mountains and villages to the north-east of Kirin he ground his quartz and washed his gold. He saw there how a large community could be utterly lawless as regards the public, yet thoroughly law-abiding within the confines of their own jurisdiction, and under the authority of a chief, with power of life and death, elected by themselves. It was, however, in the port of Newchwang that he first came in contact with Europeans.

This port, situated on the south muddy bank of the Liao River, is distant from its mouth, up the tortuous, deep and rapid tidal current, about twenty miles. The hills nearest this port are fully twenty miles to the east. The intervening plain is a dead level, which, according to the Chinese, was, little more than a century ago, the bottom of the Gulf of Liaotung. Though the land beyond is of the richest character, the neighbourhood of Newchwang within a radius of four miles is a nitre, incrustated muddy plain, with not a single redeeming feature. Within the last dozen years Newchwang

itself has been somewhat improved in appearance by the erection of a few decent houses surrounded by clusters of willows and poplars. It was, however, until lately such a place as no one would ever dream of living in for even a brief period unless brought there by business of some kind.

But though presenting to the eye only a picture of ugliness, with imagined beauties beyond those eastern lines of low-lying hills, it has for more than a generation been a considerable emporium for trade. Besides the thousands of native junks, great and small, which crowd the banks of the river, and cover with their picturesque sails the muddy waters of the gulf leading up to it, there are annually over 300 clearances of steamers, and about 350 of sailing-ships, most of the former being British, of the latter German. For the produce of the province up to the Songari, as it wends eastwards to join the Amoor, it is the main outlet, and far the greater portion of the imports for this extensive region is landed at Newchwang.

Throughout the whole province, the crop on which the agriculturist chiefly depends for his luxuries or his ready money is the small yellow pea. Everywhere, among the narrow mountain gullies as on the wide plain, the large triple ovate leaf of this

pea shows its deep green in summer and early autumn ; but when the leaf drops off, the widely branching, three-foot-high plant seems one mass of the three-grained pod. A huge, solid granite wheel, of eight feet diameter, set up on its narrow rim, drawn by several mules, revolves in a circular groove filled with these peas, crushing them to pulp. The oil in which they are remarkably rich is thus expressed. The refuse is squeezed in presses into rounded cheese-like cakes of thirty or forty pounds weight. These are the bean-oil and bean-cake of Chinese commerce. The cake alone requires hundreds of ships to carry it to Swatow and other places in the south, where it is used as manure for the sugar fields of Fukien and Kwangtung, a fraction only being retained in the north for horse-feeding.

This pea sets thousands of waggons and tens of thousands of mules in motion during the winter months, and in summer every river able to float a boat is enlivened with the white sails employed in the lucrative trade. If in winter the carts keep busy the hundreds of huge inns on the roadside, these never-ending boats from Liaoyang, Mookden, Tieling, and the north-east of Mongolia give employment in summer and a decent income to hundreds of 'middle-men' or salesmen in Newchwang.

These men, whether singly or in partnership, have their place of business as accessible as possible to the men interested in the grain trade. They know best where the grain can secure the most expeditious sale and the best price, and for a small commission they bring seller and buyer face to face. As one of these commission agents, Old Wang, in company with a few others, spent several years of his life, and it was while thus earning a livelihood he first came in contact with the Gospel.

Like the majority of those Chinese who are not compelled to labour with their hands, Old Wang was an opium smoker. The opium pipe is as generally employed here in transacting business as whisky in Scotland; and to the same vicious and senseless custom which binds commercial travellers to give or take strong drink is to be traced the equally vicious and senseless opium pipe of the commercial agent here. Though opium thus taken does nobody the slightest good, it is not to be understood that every one runs immediately into the excesses of which De Quincy wrote. Many smoke to mid life in a fashion corresponding to the moderate drinker. Men are not frequently seen insensible through opium. But the habit is of such a nature that after the first two years, within

which it may be easily abandoned, it becomes an adamantine chain, not to be broken by one in a myriad of the moderate smokers. It begets such a condition of the nervous system that, to prevent unspeakable misery, the disagreeable fumes must be inhaled into the lungs daily, once, twice, or thrice, according to the time or times of day when the nerves have had this powerful and seductive sedative applied. When these hours come round, the smoker finds it generally impossible to think of anything else till the pipe is lit.

Though opium has this advantage over strong drink, that when a man is foolish enough to allow himself to be subdued by it he is rendered harmless to all the world beyond himself and those in any way dependent upon him, it has two qualities which make it a more expensive habit. It must be had daily at fixed periods, and in order to produce the same effect it must be taken in gradually increasing quantities. Increasing opium doses involve a decreasing appetite, and a lessening power of work of all kinds, mental or bodily. The will becomes its bond slave. Every other interest and tie are absolutely subsidiary to it, and every call of duty or honour or shame is silenced by it. Before a man is thirty, he smokes with apparent impunity.

The quantity which he requires is small. If it affects his appetite, it is only infinitesimally; if it makes work of any kind more irksome, it is only comparatively. Hence the fallacy of men who see Chinese labourers smoking their pipes and doing their work, therefrom inferring that opium is not such an evil thing as represented. They should reflect that, as soon as opium has mastered a man, the slave drops out of the ranks, and like the stricken deer retires into the shade. He seeks no longer the labour for which he knows he is unfitted. Before thirty years of age, opium smoking is usually but sowing its seed; and foreigners beyond the mission circle may be excused if they remain ignorant of the manner in which that seed ripens far away from their ken.

Before Newchwang was made an open port by treaty, opium was smuggled in small lumps from the south, and sold at forty times its present price. When any junk containing smuggled opium was boarded by revenue officers, the drug was quietly slipped into the river. The real source of opium smoking and its date of introduction into Northern China can be surely inferred from the fact that, as late as 1860, it was smoked in Mookden as the greatest of all luxuries, and by the very wealthy

only, under the belief that, being a drug compounded by Westerns of the bodies of boys and girls under the age of puberty, the true male and female principles were combined in a state of purity. It was therefore purchased with great difficulty and at great cost, as it was believed to be certain to bring long life to those using it. At present every third man and many women are said to smoke opium; but it is now grown so extensively in the remote parts of the province that some is exported, and large quantities could be shipped, were freedom of production proclaimed.

As Old Wang was of a highly nervous, excitable temperament, one can readily understand how he became an easy prey to the opium habit, just as similar natures yield most readily to the influence of strong drink. It is not known whether he ever felt the somnolent spell of opium. But so much did he smoke, that, though his annual surplus after clearing all expenses was considerable, he never sent a cash to his old mother, his wife and children, all living in the depths of poverty in their remote home in the province of Chihli.

Like a considerable proportion of the Chinese people whom their national literary agnosticism has not yet completely materialized, he was of that

disposition which is known in Scripture as 'devout.' Though ignorant of a proper object of devotion, conscience compelled him to be a religious man. Buddhism, while containing a vast deal of absurdity, contains some excellent truths. It may especially be noted that Buddhism gives not the slightest countenance to the obscene impurities which seem to be of the essence of Hindooism. Its ancient atheism has become evolved into polytheism, which presents some object or objects for his adoration to the man whose inmost soul is longing after the unknown God, for whom it gropes in the dense darkness if haply it may find Him. To this class of men the worship of anything is beyond comparison preferable to the worship of nothing. Hence Wang became an earnest devotee of Buddhism, the most earnest of the religions then appealing to his reason. Buddhism is divided into endless sects, and the 'devout' must choose to which of these he will give up the care of his restless spirit. Wang had thus to choose, and prayer-chants were given to him, which he was to repeat as frequently as the Roman Catholic his *Paternoster*. He was one who naturally preferred to follow wherever truth, or what he believed to be truth, beckoned him.

Into the hands of this devout opium smoker a

Gospel fell in the year 1873. It will be understood from what has been said that he was one of those to whom the doctrines connected with the Cross should be naturally as welcome as they were assuredly applicable. But this book was a riddle to him. It was strange in appearance, of beautiful print, but to his mind a blank. He found in it, however, the name of God commonly employed throughout China—*Shangti*, 'Supreme Ruler.' To him it was a name; and nothing more. Yet the name would not permit him to rest, and by its means he was led to the foreign missionary as an inquirer. A few sentences sufficed to present him with the key to unravel the meaning of the Good News. Along with two others, he came daily for several months to hear in broken Chinese the doctrine of faith in the Son of God expounded out of Romans and Galatians. It appeared afterwards that he was then wholly engrossed in studying the Scriptures, to carry on which study he desisted altogether from business.

All this time the demon of opium had him in its firm grip. Again and again did he break off the habit, only to be again and again by unutterable misery driven back into it. At length after three days and nights on his knees in prayer to the

God of Mercy for strength, and in suffering as of a nervous man whose heart-strings are being drawn out, he secured the victory. The horrible craving began from that day to decrease. But the battle was of so sore a nature that, as he often declared, he would never have been able to overcome except on his knees. Before the year was out, he was a professing Christian. All doubt as to the propriety of administering baptism to him was removed after hearing him speak publicly on one occasion, when he thought me indifferent or disinclined to preach. He spoke so earnestly, clearly, forcibly, and enthusiastically, that no doubt remained in my mind as to my duty in the matter.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER CONVERSION.

IT is not to be supposed that Old Wang or any other Chinese believer received into his head or his heart a complete body of systematic divinity either at his conversion or upon his baptism. It has been frequently stated in periodicals of a usually well-informed character that Protestantism is a failure and Roman Catholicism a success in China, because the latter has in it so much akin to Buddhistic idolatry. We are not now concerned with the comparison between the two rival systems of proselytism in China. That idolatry, or the worship of images, together with chanting, burning of incense, prohibition of marriage, and a number of other customs are common to Romanism and Buddhism, most people know. Yet whatever success has attended Romanism in China is not because, but in spite of such correspondence.

In speaking against the native forms of idolatry, the Roman Catholic can never satisfactorily reply to the question why he is himself an idolater.

It should also be recollected that Romanism, two centuries ago, because of considerable talent among its missionaries and a broad tolerance of several heathen practices, gained so high a position that the hopes soon to convert the Chinese Empire did not appear to be over-sanguine. Why the priests failed, and how they made themselves the object of fierce persecution, it is not our purpose to recite here. But it should not be forgotten that there were then more Roman Catholics in China than now, and that the larger proportion of those now in China are the descendants of those who in persecution firmly retained their faith. There is in this province a man who is in the eighth generation of a Roman Catholic family ; and a young man who is in the eleventh generation of another family recently applied for admission to us. It is neither its ceremony, pomp, nor pride which has given Romanism the position it possesses, nor will these account for one of a hundred of its converts.

Without ignoring the fact that there are nominal conversions from improper motives, experience testifies that the one outstanding influence in changing the temple-frequenting Chinaman into a worshipper

of the true God is that which converted Old Wang—the revelation in Jesus of the mercy of the one living and true God. The love of the Father manifested in the loving Son is that which makes men here break their idols and cast their chanted prayers into the flames. The first inciting motive is that which many brave Christians sneer at as a selfish and therefore an unworthy one. That which urges them to seek salvation now in this way, now in that, and finally to ‘believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,’ is the fear of future suffering on account of sin. Theoretically it is more noble to be indifferent to personal suffering or the fear of it, and to seek rather to be ‘virtuous for virtue’s sake.’ Yet somehow humanity presents but rare cases of such nobility. The first cry now in the hearts of millions of Chinese, and often on their lips, is that which rang in the ears of the Apostles, ‘What must we do to be saved?’ ‘How shall I escape from the wrath to come?’ is but the articulate expression of the soul-fear of the conscience-stricken. And this, after all, is but natural. The man who, far out at sea, is overtaken by a tempest every wave of which threatens to engulf his tiny boat, is not in the least anxious as to whether the brine is damaging his clothing. And when he beholds a ship in the distance, he cries at the pitch of his voice, not to have

his face washed, but his life saved. Once on board, the feeling of security admits of his paying attention to his garments and personal appearance.

Such we have found Chinese converts. Those of them in whom we have most confidence have become converts through the heart rather than the head. After they have begun to lean on the salvation from that destruction in which they believe, they have still much to learn. Many of them, indeed, find it hard to believe that salvation in reality signifies freedom from the thralldom of sin. While ever ready to acknowledge the obligation and to profess the desire to live a 'good' life, if questioned, they will almost always reply that salvation means freedom from the punishment of sin. The many other lessons will be one by one learnt, though the process of education is prolonged. The missionary who desires the work to prosper in his hands must possess his soul in patience. With composure, and often with a wise silence, he must listen to many notions and doctrines which to him seem quite opposed to the spirit no less than the letter of his Bible. He must bide the best time to give the proper lesson, to correct the error he knows to exist, to supplement the knowledge already imperfectly acquired.

Had Old Wang not been thus gently and to him

unconsciously led, and had he been hectorred and lectured on account of all the strange or loose opinions which, with the truth he knew, jumbled themselves together in a remarkable mental medley, his impetuous and fiery temper would have driven him off repeatedly during the first two years after his conversion. Indeed, on one occasion, while his mind was still in that incoherent condition, he was erroneously influenced by a 'false brother' pretending to great experience. He came to me with his finger on a certain passage of Scripture, asking an explanation thereof in excited language and a manner strangely wild. The reply was given with the calmness of one who did not care to note the excitement; but I went into the house with a heavy heart, believing that Old Wang was about to drop off. He soon, however, perceived and acknowledged that he had been seriously misled. Bit by bit was his mental furniture put up, the old taken down, readjusted, or cast away. He was not naturally of conspicuous ability, his understanding having been but an average one. He had, however, what was even better, a fearless courage ready to do or dare anything for what he considered right and good. 'Think you,' he has often said to large audiences bitterly mocking him, 'think you I would consent, for

the paltry sum I receive from the foreigner, to stand here day after day to be vilified and taunted by you as a traitor to my country, a demon's slave, a foreigner, and such other names as your anger invents? I am no follower of the foreigner. I follow the doctrines which the foreigner has brought. The foreigner has given me the truth of Heaven, and that truth I must follow. Let the foreigner depart; we have the Bible, and we know the truth, and we will teach and repeat it if there be no foreigners in the land.'

Years were required before his impetuous, independent nature learned that patient endurance was superior to indignant remonstrance. But with every succeeding year there was a decided improvement. He was a diligent student of the truth, though not a remarkably bright one. His character, therefore, became more and more mellowed as the years went by, till those who knew him only at the last could not realize that the commencement of his career was erratic in regard to doctrine, and powerfully influenced by a temper requiring but a little wind to rouse it into storm. If latterly his speech, while as earnest as ever, was more calm and dignified, it was because his character had matured, and his greatly increased Christian knowledge had not only strengthened his

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understanding, as the mere morality of Confucianism could not have done, but had also borne its appropriate fruit externally in his daily life, and internally in mastery over his feelings and passions.

CHAPTER III.

WORK IN DAPINGSHAN.

ON all sides of Newchwang lies a level plain saturated with nitre, producing but sparse crops on its thinly populated fields. Just on the outermost verge of this unfavourable soil, and a dozen miles to the south-east of Newchwang, lies the village of Dapingshan, or the 'Large Level Hill,' it being the first elevation in that direction. Though the sea is now about four miles from that village, few generations have passed since its waves rubbed away the granite at the foot of this hill, on which, but lately, were to be seen the ruins of a small temple to the god of the sea, whose temples are erected only on the sea-shore. It can therefore be inferred that the owners of the small estates of a few acres each are not wealthy, and that but a very little difficulty is able to bring them to the end of their resources.

The autumn of 1873 was the third of a series of

disastrous harvests. Once by drought, again by floods, the crops of 1871 and 1872 were all but annihilated. While the crops stood high in 1873, and flatteringly promised to undo the evils of the past, continuous rains fell over the whole of Southern Manchuria. The fields were everywhere covered with stagnant or flowing water. The neighbourhood of Newchwang, on account of its low level, suffered particularly severe damages. During the two preceding years only a fraction of their crops was secured by the people, who had, in order to procure food, to sell whatever would realize money. But this flood rotted every green thing where it stood, so that not even the tall millet-stalk could be secured for fuel. By a native of the place, carrying on business in Newchwang, it was reported that the only food and fuel procurable by the great majority of the inhabitants consisted of the roots of grass torn by mattock out of the hill-sides. When it is mentioned that continuous frost, from the latter end of November, so hardens the ground that it is almost as easy to cut through rock as through the soil, it will be understood with what difficulty life could be thus sustained.

Having been desirous of extending into the country districts the means of teaching the people about Him who is the Bread of Life, this was considered a favour-

able opportunity. In ordinary circumstances the hostility to and fear of foreigners were of such a character that no village door would have opened to the missionary. An appeal to the European population realised £20. A similar sum was received from our Home Society. By Chinese new year's day, which falls on the new moon of February, several cart-loads of grain were emptied at the mission house for the use of the hunger-bitten people. After several unsuccessful attempts, a house was secured in the village, to be used as a school. Grain was provided for such children as should go to receive education in Chinese literature. It was also published that personal applicants at Newchwang, on proof shown of their destitution, should receive a measure of fully thirty pounds weight per man per month till the arrival of spring would relieve the intensity of the strain upon them. As indicative of the spirit actuating the people, it may be mentioned that nearly two months passed before a scholar appeared at the school, or an applicant for millet presented himself in Newchwang. It transpired afterwards that when such applicants did at last come forward, it was because they saw no escape from death by starvation, and with the argument that whatever evil design the foreigner had in trying to entrap them into his power, it could not be worse than death.

A teacher was engaged for the scholarless school, and Old Wang was sent to carry out the design in view. By the time he had been two months in the village he was able so far to overcome the scruples of a few parents as to have three boys in school. As these had enough to eat, and seemed in no manner the worse for their connexion with the foreigner, others gradually dropped in, and a full school of boys and girls caused the neighbourhood to resound with the loud sing-song of the scholars memorizing lists of Chinese characters. Wang, young as a convert though he was, had a commission to hold worship and Scripture readings with the scholars, and as many of the neighbours as cared to attend. Many went to this morning and evening service from its commencement, primarily from curiosity, latterly from interest. In order to alleviate as much as possible the overwhelming suspicion of the villagers, the school saw no foreigner for several months. When matters were in fair working operation I rode out every Wednesday, and had a crowded audience of men and women, along with the children.

When, finally, the foreigner came to be regarded as a friend, I stayed over a night in the school, to see for myself the manner in which the ordinary day's work was conducted. The hours spent in learning, reading, and writing the hieroglyphic characters of Chinese

were from sunrise to sunset—with intervals for breakfast and supper—Chinese usually eating only two meals per day. After each meal Wang had charge of both teacher and scholars, to carry out the duty devolving upon him, of performing worship and imparting Christian instruction.

On this particular occasion, as soon as the evening meal of boiled millet and salted beans was over, the children sat down on forms which stood around a square table, at which Wang was seated, and worship was conducted as usual. Hymn books were served out to the scholars and the neighbouring men and women who had dropped in, and at Wang's request one of the boys started the tune to a hymn. All present joined in the singing, which was far more hearty than musical, for Old Wang's love of music and hymnology greatly exceeded the accuracy of his ear. He was the only musical instructor known to the children, and it was not to be wondered at if they exercised their lungs under the belief that they were singing exactly the tune which Western children sang to the hymn of which they were singing the translation. It was, however, impossible to recognise in the tunes as sung in that school the music of the West. Yet it should not therefore be supposed that the endless changes of notes, and the remarkable variations on

the original, were a correct index to the singing capacity of the Chinese. Elsewhere, and under other instruction, we have seen, not only children, but men and women sing with as much accuracy as warmth the tunes as sung by ourselves in the West. In the case of this first school, the blame of inaccuracy lay not with the scholars, but with Old Wang, whose notes they faithfully repeated.

After the hymn was sung a whole chapter was read, verse by verse, by the children in rotation. Then, after Wang had explained and applied the contents of the chapter, he called on a boy to engage in prayer. This was done in language which astonished me, and in a manner most devout, all present manifesting a solemnity which seemed to show that they realized the duty in which they were engaged. Another hymn, started by another boy, concluded what to me was a remarkably pleasing service, and which demonstrated the fidelity of Wang in the discharge of his work.

Next morning the same order was observed after the millet breakfast, the boys who led being different. It then transpired that all the boys were trained by Wang, unknown to me to take their turn at the service; and what most surprised me was the discovery that the boys did not pray by rote, except when they

were just beginning, but were taught each to express his own thoughts in prayer, whether in the language of gratitude or petition. So well did they do this, that I question if any school in this Christian country could, as a whole, have done as well.

The long winter, wherein both men and women had no other labour than the picking up of fuel, was favourable to the dissemination of Christian truth. Before the labours of spring began many of the villagers were familiar with the main doctrines forming the elements of Christianity. The children became enthusiastic believers, as far as hymn-singing and iconoclasm were concerned. Certain of them even dared to destroy the village gods. To people emerging out of idolatrous customs into the awe-inspiring and all-embracing purity of Christian spirituality, the worship of idols seems the greatest of all possible sins, and hostility to idols the chief of all duties, possibly under the unconscious influence of the fact that it is the easiest of all virtues. In the case of almost all converts there is a necessity for bridling in, rather than spurring on this feature of conversion. The Dapingshan villagers took very calmly the destruction of their images, connecting it, like the practical people they are, with the advantages they were receiving, and which they could less conveniently

spare. Indeed, the Chinese nowhere manifest the same profound respect for their images which devout Roman Catholics everywhere display.

Many months of Christian instruction had not been given to the villagers before two husbands and their wives became applicants for baptism, one couple stating that they had never believed in idols. Old Wang's connexion with Dapingshan terminated within two years. During that time not only was there a flourishing boys' and girls' school carried on, in which every scholar professed faith in the Saviour, but about a dozen people were baptized, others dying in the faith, though unbaptized. The great majority of the people professed to have renounced idolatry, and in the families of the principal landowners of the district were several diligent students of Scripture. The schools were removed to Newchwang, where the girls' school was carried on for years.

During Wang's stay in Dapingshan first appeared a feature of his Christian character which never abandoned him. Besides those who were relieved within the rules laid down by me, there were others in want, though not starving. After summer had set in it transpired that Wang had paid three months of his own wages to such needy ones, whom he set to improve the roads in the village. Every year of his

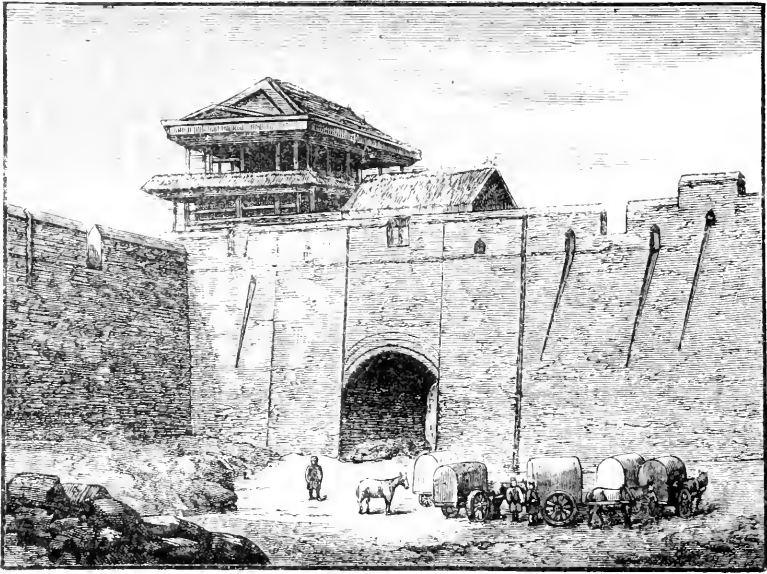
subsequent life saw a considerable proportion of his small income thus spent on those more needy than himself. So much was this the case that, to procure for himself the barest needful clothing, he had invariably to be given in winter more than the allowance nominally made him. Though my senior in years, he was often seriously reprimanded for the excess of his generosity, which thus left him bare of necessaries. Yet it was impossible to be blind to the fact that the impulsive generosity which made it impossible for him to eat alone if a hungry man were near, or to keep his second coat if a semi-naked figure appealed to him, was precisely the same which made him the earnest and fearless preacher. When judged by cold reason, he would always acknowledge that in many of his actions he was imprudent ; but with the next temptation reason fell, and feeling bore undisputed sway. It is difficult for some people to perform a generous action ; it was equally difficult for Old Wang to refrain from doing it. This was doubtless one of the causes which secured to him the affection and esteem of both rich and poor in and around the village.

When acting as commission agent, his credit balance, after paying all expenses, was usually about £20 per annum. Ignorant of what his former income had been, he was asked to undertake the post and

responsibility of opening the new station in Dapingshan, with a salary amounting to about £10 per annum. He accepted this post at this wage. After eating his common fare, and clothing himself with the cotton garments of a respectable labourer, he could have but little money left for other purposes. Yet, as has been stated, he was in the habit of giving away to others more needy than himself. During the period of his merchandise he had dropped all connexion with his maternal home, his father having died long ago. But with a change of heart came a changed relationship.

No duty is so heartily professed and none so earnestly inculcated in China as that of children to support and obey their parents. Opium had been a more powerful motive with the commission agent, but Christianity retaught the neglected lesson so energetically that he from time to time sent small sums and letters to his mother and wife, for whose conversion he was now anxious. A younger brother was then in business in a remote town in Mongolia, where hundreds of thousands of Chinese cultivate the soil, renting it at a small rate from the Mongol Prince. He heard of letters and money going to his home from his elder brother, who had been as one dead. Wondering what this new religion was which had reformed his brother from opium, and converted him

into a dutiful son, he came all the way to Newchwang to learn. But he did not return, as he too became a convert. Since then he has been known as Wang No. 2, his brother, though in the prime of life, becoming Old Wang, or 'Honourable' Wang. The younger brother has done good service as an evangelist in Newchwang, where many have learned Christian truth from his lips. He lacks the impulsive enthusiasm of his brother, but excels him as a business man—statements which most people know to be not incompatible. Old Wang paid a visit subsequently to his home, near Peking, his principal design being to preach the Gospel to his family, and especially to his old mother. He returned with a request that I should go to his native place to baptize his mother and wife. His mother came several years thereafter to Newchwang, where she was baptized.



ONE OF THE GATES OF MOOKDEN.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AT MOOKDEN.

HAVING visited Mookden¹ in the spring of 1873, I was much struck with its extent, its swarming population, and the busy and imposing officialism of its large streets, all clearly indicating it to be the capital. The country, far as the eye could reach on both sides of the road from Newchwang, showed a high state of careful cultivation, and the presence of a very numerous and diligent peasantry. This city is not only the official and social capital of Manchuria, but the

¹ Mougden, Mugden, Mukden, Moukden, or Mookden, as it has been variously written, is an old Manchu name now unused; it is generally known as Shunyang, Shungking, or Fungtien-foo.

centre of business for that enormous extent of country, from the Gulf of Liaotung to the Amoor. Having been the latest capital of the Manchus prior to their entry into Peking, it ranks second, after the great capital, of all the cities in China. The imperial palace is still kept in repair, for the possible visit of the Emperor to the land of his ancestors. Duplicates of all the important documents connected with the internal and governmental history of the present dynasty are said to be stored up in its treasury. There is also a duplicate of all the Boards of Peking, excepting that of Appointments.

The enormous cart traffic running through the city from all quarters necessitates great width in the main streets, which are said to be kept in better order than those of any other Chinese city. There are many secondary streets, in all of which carts can cross each other, while the narrowest lanes are broader than the streets of southern cities. Probably the merchandise in which most capital is invested, next to the huge grain stores, is the fur trade. Of sables alone over 10,000 are annually brought into the city. Squirrels innumerable, foxes of several varieties, tiger, wolf, leopard, bear, and others too numerous to mention are sent from this city to Peking on the west, and Shanghai to the south. Important though its commercial aspect

be, the city is yet essentially an official one. It is the heart of all that is active and thoughtful throughout this land, and is therefore of the greatest importance from a missionary point of view, as everything done here is speedily known throughout, and influences more or less the entire province.

As another mission which had been established in Newchwang before us expressed a desire to occupy the route westwards on the way to Peking, it was agreed that we should work towards the north. Therefore, about the end of 1875, while Old Wang was carrying on his work so well in Dapingshan, a Mahommedan convert was sent to Mookden to act as colporteur. Though no direct proof of neglect of duty was forthcoming, this agent did not give that satisfaction which was considered indispensable to the proper prosecution of Christian work in such a place. Meantime the work in Dapingshan had so far advanced that no more than occasional oversight was needful to retain and deepen the impressions already made, and Old Wang was accordingly nominated to Mookden.

The colporteur had been commissioned to hire a house on any of the main streets. He had secured a number of houses in succession, but as soon as it was known that the place was wanted for a foreigner, the

owner broke his bargain. At length he did hire a wretched little place belonging to one of the Manchu princes, himself living in Peking, his house property being entrusted to a superior slave. As this house had been empty for years, and no Chinaman would rent so tumble-down a hole, it was never withdrawn from us. It stood two feet below the level of the street, its walls about eight feet high, its shaky roof propped up by more than a dozen wooden pillars planted at irregular intervals over the twenty feet square of mud flooring. Even this house was, however, gladly accepted, and in it was fought the fierce and long-contested battle as to whether the name of Jesus was or was not to be publicly preached in Mookden.

The duties of Old Wang were not, however, at first within these dingy walls, but with his bundle of books on the main streets of the city. His instructions were to make his books texts from which to preach Christianity, rather than to consider them as a stock-in-trade. That a few books sold to men who were made acquainted with their general meaning were of far more real service than thousands sold to men without any oral instruction, had been early forced upon me as a truth which must be practically attended to, whatever theory might be pleased to say to the contrary. Several seekers after such truth as promised to pacify

their unquiet spirits discovered Wang's daily stand. They went to purchase books, but especially to hear expounded this new and strange religion, based not on works of merit, on fasts, chanted prayers, giving of alms, nor on donations of money to temples, but on the free, the unbought, and unpurchasable mercy of Heaven.

To such seekers Wang, who had himself been of their number, was exactly the proper teacher, even though their learning may have greatly surpassed his. Of such seekers there were not a few in this city, and multiplied throughout the province, of whom a considerable number is now within our little Church, more are enquirers, and many are timid believers in secret. These are not begotten of superstition. They are breathed upon by a higher Spirit, which compels them to seek for what promises to appease the hunger and thirst of their souls. In superstition they endeavour to find what they lack, but they have regretfully to acknowledge that, however earnestly it applies itself to meet their wants, by not one of its innumerable recipes can it provide that aliment which they require. Christianity does meet their need and satisfy their soul.

Of those who thus in the beginning of his work applied to Old Wang for help, two were baptized at an

early stage. One of them is a remarkably good Chinese scholar. His brothers are all possessed of literary degrees, which he too could easily have won, but for an unconquerable shyness arising from incurable stammering. He had heaps of Buddhistic and Taositic literature which he had studied for years, but out of which he received less spiritual insight than he obtained by two days' conversation with Wang. The other had become a member of nearly all the Buddhist sects, finding them all consecutively empty cisterns, wells indeed of fair exterior, but within they contained no water. He has long been one of our most earnest and successful preachers.

The name of Old Wang will be indissolubly connected with the opening of Mookden to Christianity. The interference of the magistrate, English or Chinese, to secure immunity from hot discussion or petty persecution is to be deprecated, as calculated to raise a barrier between the missionary and the people. Except in very serious cases, 'patient endurance in well-doing' is the better policy, and will produce its own reward in ultimate confidence and respect. Hence the fierce opposition of a section of the literary class was met only by patient endurance and kindly teaching. In this battle Wang shone forth with all the greater lustre in the eyes of those

who knew his natural passionate disposition and short temper.

The belief that the missionary forms the vanguard of foreign aggression has been widespread, and has taken deep hold of the Chinese mind. The reasons for this uncomfortable belief that missions are a political agency, though not far to seek, we shall not at present expound. Suffice it to say that the belief is the most serious obstacle standing in the way of the missionary. The common people are little concerned as to the nationality or character of the actual ruler, as long as they are allowed to carry on without molestation their commerce or their agriculture. They are sufficiently willing to pay their light taxes, and to leave to the Government the right of spending them as they choose, and the duty of conducting in its own way all kinds of political action.

But the literary classes, out of which all the mandarins are chosen, regard politics and interference with them in quite another light. They and the official classes are of the same grade ; what affects the one class affects the other. Although the literary man may never become an official, he is always well up in years before he loses hope that in some position he will be called upon to serve the state. Hence the literary classes are intensely political. Whatever,

therefore, is calculated to injure the prospects or damage the prestige of the official class, is at once looked upon as a foe by the literary man. The common people, as a rule, have but a languid interest in the movements of the missionary, and they are not deeply moved by either his failure or success in the work. But as success by a missionary is, in the estimation of the literary man, only another name for recruits for the armies of the foreigner, he is keenly sensitive to the subject. With the exception of a few who reason themselves into believing that Christianity denounces, and is necessarily antagonistic to, Confucianism, there are none, as far as we have learned, who are opposed to Christianity as a religious system. All the opposition encountered by Christianity arises from the belief that it is a political agency.

This belief found several active exponents in Mookden, who considered themselves called upon to save the country from the political poison, to spread which among the people the foreigner came to live among them. As soon as they began to know somewhat of the doctrines of Christianity, they publicly acknowledged them unquestionably good, but the design with which these doctrines were promulgated was as unquestionably evil, and to be obstinately resisted. The very excellence of its moral maxims

constituted the real danger from Christianity, for it was all the more serviceable as a bait to catch the Chinese, by removing their enmity against the foreigner, thus converting the simple-minded among the people into foreign agents or tools. From this we can find it not difficult to understand how and why it is that the literary classes are said to be everywhere hostile to missionary operations. If those men, for whose standpoint we can surely find some reasonable apology, could but be persuaded that missions, at all events Protestant missions, are not in any way mixed up with politics, they would at once lose the sting of their bitterness against Christianity, and cease everywhere their active demonstrations of hostility.

This statement of the attitude of Chinese scholarship towards Christianity will explain the opposition which the mission in Mookden had to encounter. A band of clever, well-dressed young gentlemen, bolder than the rest of their fellows, went daily to the chapel to pester the preachers, and with the publicly avowed design of driving Christianity out of the Manchu citadel. Their hatred of Old Wang was of the fiercest description, and as they were literary men, and he one of the common people, they could treat him to his face with all the contumely manifested in other countries by aristocrats to unpleasant persons, their

'inferiors' in the social scale. They made his life there a daily torture. The crowds which constantly filled the little chapel were completely under the control of these undergraduates and teachers, and whenever these gave the word, especially if they were having the worst of the argument, the crowd to a man followed them as they rushed out by the door, leaving the preacher or preachers standing on the platform alone.

These men were not only hostile openly and fearlessly, but triumphantly defiant. 'Never,' they shouted again and again, with irritating assurance and bold rudeness, 'never will there be a convert made in this city while one of us lives. We will have no traitors in this city, the home of the Great Manchu Dynasty!' Most of these young men were Manchus, who in every place assume an air of superiority over the Chinese, of whom Wang was one. His life was thus for a considerable time a most uncomfortable one. But never did he think of shirking the trouble, of shrinking from the persecution, or even of asking for a few holidays by way of respite. He had the satisfaction of ultimately living down that open hostility, of seeing many converts there; and for the troubles through which he had to pass he was not without compensation afterwards, when he came to be spoken

of and treated with respect by 'all classes of the city community.

For perhaps a year the work at Mookden could be described as merely defensive. Thereafter it began to crawl cautiously and slowly forward ; it is now advancing by bounds. The publicly active hostility died down after a couple of years. During my absence in Scotland the interests of the mission were left without misgiving in charge of Wang, who had recently been elected an elder, assisted by the young preacher who had been one of his first converts. One of the converts had been elected as manager by the small congregation. He was a strong-willed, clear-headed man, but one whose disinterestedness of service was not free from doubt. Believing that this man's influence would not produce the best effects if it were without check exercised upon Old Wang, he was warned against trusting in matters relating to the affairs of the mission, to any man, except the young preacher, the manager's name being specially mentioned as one demanding caution. But two years of daily intercourse cannot fail to make an impression when one man is cunning and the other simple, and Wang was misled. Before, however, opportunity of fault-finding occurred, he had cast off the seductive influence.

The manager, on account of several cases of interference in litigation, with which his only concern was the bettering his own condition, was ejected from the Church by the general desire and all but unanimous vote of the congregation. Mistakes made by congregations beginning to grope their way out of old associations and heathen practices, are regrettable only as the stumbling of an infant tottering its first steps. They are not pleasant, but helpless dependence upon an autocratic foreign missionary is worse. The Church in Mookden will not soon be guilty of electing a man to any office merely because he is eager to obtain the post. Old Wang received a sharp lesson too, which he never afterwards forgot, and no specious arguments of assisting the injured could draw him again into giving his name to favour any party in litigation.

Though located in a large city with much wealth, and its evidences on all hands of him, Old Wang did not consider himself exempted from attending to the calls of poverty, which appealed to him there as they did in the small country village. The three years' famine in Northern China, the pitiful tale of which sent a wave of sad sympathy all round the world, drove many of the impoverished people of Shantung and Chihli into Mookden. Some of these moved about

the streets in the deepest wretchedness, though provision was made on a not illiberal scale to meet their clamant wants. These found their way in considerable numbers to the chapel, where Old Wang soon exhausted his own resources, giving away his clothing to the all but naked wretches whose destitute appearance wrung his heart, and his meals were shared by many an unfortunate being before he was compelled to apply for assistance to carry on this work of mercy which, with the aid of a few equally poor members, he was so unostentatiously doing. To the last this trait, this readiness to help those more unfortunate than himself, never abandoned him, and his generous impulses ceased only when his heart had ceased to beat.

CHAPTER V.

WORK AT LIAOYANG.

SOON after my return from Scotland in 1881 it was deemed expedient and opportune to open a new station in the city of Liaoyang, forty miles south-west of Mookden. Prior to the middle of the 17th century this city was the capital of Manchuria. And wisely was the selection made, for it is the centre of the richest and most extensive plain of cereal-producing soil in the province. Though now necessarily subordinate to Mookden both in population and influence, it is yet of considerable size and importance.

Old Wang was sent to rent a chapel. He was in the meantime to live in an inn, and preach on the street or in private, as occasion offered. So universal was the opposition to foreigners, however, that no house could be had on any terms. At length one of Wang's converts, old Chiao, referred to below, who

was well known in Liaoyang, was able to secure a decent house on a main street. As there were men growing in knowledge who promised to be good preachers in Mookden under the foreigner, the two tried and experienced preachers, Wang and his youthful colleague, were appointed to the new post. With little assistance from the foreign missionary these two men sustained the brunt of a determined and persistent attack, all sorts of measures having been resorted to in order to drive them away or to silence them. The ringleaders were idle young literary Manchus, of whom Liaoyang contains a large colony; the real cause of disturbance being the usual political one. These young Manchus annoyed the preacher by every means which they could devise. They contradicted his statements; they upbraided him as a traitor to his country, paid by the foreigner to act as a spy; they initiated wordy discussions, with the express design of distracting his attention from the preaching of the Gospel in which he was so earnest. But ridicule, anger, opposition or discussion, though they irritated the elderly man, had no influence upon his course of action, nor did they prevent him from opening daily his chapel doors at the usual hour. Finding their efforts to close the chapel in this way vain, they tried other modes of annoy-

ance. They hired beggars to throw dead cats into the chapel. The sign designating it as the place where the true religion of Jesus was proclaimed was wrenched off by night, and never recovered, though the mandarin of the place took action to find it.

The cleverest form of disturbance was, however, the sending to the chapel daily of a man whom 'much learning' had made mad. He had been a diligent and successful student, but in his unintermitting ardour to push rapidly up the tree of learning his overworked brain failed him, and the seat of reason was upset. He went about in strange garments and with a fantastic head-dress, sometimes crowned with a wreath of flowers. For a considerable time he went day by day to interrupt by his learned harangues the eloquence of the preacher, or to confound him by a flow of classical lore. The threat one day by the foreigner of having him sent to the magistrate caused him to slowly depart, and an impassioned harangue of great learning outside the chapel door was the last disturbance by that poor man, and the end of public attempts to hinder the preacher.

It is right to state that as soon as the Liaoyang magistrate was formally apprized of trouble in the chapel, he immediately issued a very favourable proclamation, commanding the people to keep the peace, and

threatening punishment in case of disobedience. This proclamation, officially stamped, was pasted up in the chapel, to be seen by all. The following is a translation of a somewhat similar one lately issued under similar circumstances in the more northerly city and mission station of Kaiyuen; it is inserted here as the Liaoyang one is not at hand. After setting forth in two long lines his various titles, the Manchu superior magistrate of Kaiyuen stated that the 'Treaty between China and England permits the pastor to travel in the interior to preach the Correct Doctrine of Jesus, for the purpose of exhorting soldiers and people and of revealing the truth that Heaven loves men. Pastor Wei has opened a chapel in the south street of this city in order to proclaim the doctrine of Heaven, and now asks for an official proclamation to make known this design to both Manchus and Chinese, and to prevent the ignorant from evil conduct. The pastor has opened in the south street a chapel with the sole purpose of publishing the doctrine of Heaven and of urging men to holiness, and he does not entertain any other secret design. This therefore is to proclaim to the Manchus, the people, the graduates and the merchants that if after the issue of this proclamation any one goes to the chapel to hear he must cause no disturbance. If he does not desire to hear the

preaching, let him mind his own business; he must not in the chapel be meddlesome and noisy. And if any shall hereafter be the cause of trouble in the chapel, the preacher will report him to this office. Let each man be careful to take heed to the proclamation now issued. 22nd day of 5th moon of the 13th year of Kuangsu.'

If therefore Old Wang had to encounter considerable opposition in Liaoyang, he was at last made aware from the readiness with which a friendly proclamation was issued, that he could if necessary fall back for protection upon the power of the magistrate. Faithful, however, to his former training, he resolved to appeal to the law only as a last resort, for his aim was to win the confidence of the people—even of those his enemies—by patient endurance. With an unflinching courage and a burning enthusiasm for his daily toil, he went every day to meet the irritating taunts of the hostile element in the city. He had passed through a much fiercer fire in Mookden, and was therefore all the bolder to bravely hold his post.

Within the year Wang had the satisfaction of seeing several seek him privately for Christian instruction, two of whom became members. The opponents of the preachers gradually came to under-

stand that these were not Roman Catholics, nor agents of some foreign government paid to sow treason. For two years there has been no other disturbance of the peace there than the bracing disputation sometimes maintained in support of the rapidly sinking cause of idolatry. Already there are in the city about fifty persons who have been baptized, all of them ever 'ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them,' while two give promise of becoming able preachers.

There was in the city a large family of Roman Catholics. One of them was noted for his daring opposition to the native magistracy. He reasoned with Wang for some time after the opening of the chapel, telling him there was no salvation except by obedience to the Pope, and doing the will of Jesus by honouring Mary, the more especially as Protestants were the followers of the licentious Henry of England, who set up Protestantism to enable him to have several wives, a thing forbidden him by the Pope. Wang by his familiarity with Scripture proved more than a match for this strong-headed brazen-faced man, who was ultimately glad to defend himself by saying that 'we all believed in the same Jesus.' It was this same man who said afterwards to Wang that he could not understand how it was that Protestant converts, though illiterate, could preach so

freely, while even literary Roman Catholics were unable to do so. A few of the middle class of Liaoyang have been baptized, while a good many of the same class are favourably disposed to Christianity, and said to be believers in secret, some of them, indeed, being not ashamed to indoctrinate their friends.

The case of one of these converts is interesting, as illustrative of the influences, potential and actual, of Confucianistic teaching upon an inquiring, intelligent and receptive mind. One of the first converts baptized was a member of a widely-extended family, Liw, which has considerable property in the neighbourhood of Liaoyang. This young man had been, like Old Wang, a devoted and most earnest Buddhist, and was therefore all the more accessible to Christian teaching. He was visited by another member of the family who was a teacher in the first capital of the Manchus, a large town at a distance. There he had married, and conducted a school of his own. Though a younger man, he was in intellect and scholarship superior to the convert, but he heard so much of Christian truth as induced him to go to the Liaoyang chapel to learn more. From three in the afternoon till long after 'lamplight' an attentive audience sat on, but at last dispersed, giving the inquirer an

opportunity to present himself for more minute inquiry in the 'back room.' After three days' intercourse he fairly understood the Christian system.

He was an ardent admirer and disciple of Confucius, but, unlike the immense majority of such disciples, he thought for himself. He was a most diligent student, and though he appropriated all the truths of Confucianism into his mental system, he was never satisfied. Truth was still truth, but each truth stood apart from its neighbours. He yearned and sought for some central truth which would consolidate his isolated truths into a cohesive system; but for this master truth he longed in vain. As he expressed it, he 'had no sure foothold.' He possessed a number of excellent and precious stones cut and polished, but they lay scattered about. He had no 'stable foundation' on which to build his mental dwelling-house. His mind was therefore always ill at ease. At his first hearing of Christianity he seemed to find the central truth which he had so long vainly sought. He became an earnest student of Scripture, in which he secured peace and rest, like so many more. He is now the much esteemed and successful preacher in Liaoyang.

CHAPTER VI.

YENTAI, OR GOSPEL PROPAGATION.

As an example of the manner in which the Gospel is disseminated, let me give a sketch of its history in the town of Yentai, half-way between Mookden and Liaoyang. On all sides of this town spreads out a rich plain, producing abundant food for a densely-crowded population dwelling in numerous villages. The town contains about 3,000 people, and possesses those signs of a respectable and prosperous country town, a pawnshop and distillery.

The pawnshop in Manchuria occupies the place held by the bank in the West. In borrowing money, however, instead of the surety of another man or of immovable property, the pawnshop demands as security articles of nearly double the value of the amount to be borrowed. If the article is not redeemed within two years from payment of the

last interest due, it falls to the shop, which sells it. Interest is fixed by government, and however long unpaid, it must never exceed the amount of the capital. Were some such rule introduced into India, the people would have reason to be grateful. The proprietor of a pawnshop occupies the social position here which a capitalist owning a bank would hold in Britain. There are joint stock pawnshops, but they are rare.

The owner of a distillery has much the same place in the esteem of his neighbours as the pawnshop proprietor. And associated with them in importance is the owner of the large inns provided for the accommodation of a hundred or more travellers and seven times as many mules or horses. Yentai boasts one of these, as well as several of the less distinguished inns for the reception of foot travellers, of whom there are so many. The town consists of one long main street, composed almost entirely of shops, off which strike short, narrow lanes, where families reside.

Like every other important country centre, this town has two 'headmen' elected by the landowners. These are responsible for the amount of taxes levied on the land, which they hand to the tax collector. They must see that the laws are observed by the people, and prevent such crimes as gambling. Many

local disputes are also laid before and decided by them. But their most important work is to act as the legal representatives of the town and surrounding community, when the public interests of the people demand an appeal to the County Court. To cover the constant drain of expenditure connected with the litigation of the town, a voluntary tax of so much per acre is levied on the land.

One of the two chiefs of this town was named Chiao Foo. Because of his thorough acquaintance with the best modes of transacting legal business he was for many years re-elected one of the two, the other being possessed of the name, while all the work devolved upon him. In his youth he had succeeded to considerable property, his father having left large landed estates, several places of business, including the large inn of Yentai, besides ready money. The young man had, however, from youth learned to smoke opium and to gamble,—two expensive habits. These habits are of course inconsistent with proper attention to business, which had, therefore, to be left in the hands of all but irresponsible agents. If this involves danger everywhere, it is specially hazardous in China. Piece after piece of land had to be sold or mortgaged. A love of litigation superadded to his other expensive pro-

pensities caused his properties gradually to slip away, till, ten years ago, he had remaining only a small inn for foot-travellers.

In this inn Old Wang rested on his first journey to Mookden. He found the landlord smoking opium, and began immediately to unfold to him that Christianity which had freed himself from the grip of the hateful vice. By that time Chiao, who had fallen so low in worldly estate mainly because of his opium, was heartily weary of the habit, which had enervated his body as well as emasculated his mind. He would fain have ceased smoking, but the chains were too strong to be broken. Wang told him how alone he could become free,—by trust in and prayer for help to the Almighty with faith in His Son. Wang's journeys up and down were frequent, and his reception at this inn was so pleasant that he made a point of passing the night there, at whatever time of day he arrived. Chiao became a believer, but for seven years he could not apply to be received into the Church, as it was impossible for him to abandon his pipe; and it has been found necessary all over China to make total abstinence an indispensable condition before baptism is administered.

After the habit becomes confirmed, disuse of opium produces a disease—opium dysentery—said to be of

so distressing a nature that the victim prefers the inevitable but more slowly-approaching death by the pipe. Resolving at last to be free, he betook himself for refuge to pills prepared in Shanghai, containing a small quantity of morphia. These, without knowing their ingredients, he received from Wang, and used in a gradually decreasing quantity till the craving was quieted. He was then baptized. To the last, however, he was unable to live without medicine of some kind to stay his nerves. After exchanging the pipe for the medicine, not only did he avoid the pain of sudden renunciation, but his strength of body and vigour of mind returned to such a degree that he could walk, or read, or work twice as much as he was able to do before, and do it with pleasure instead of pain and difficulty.

That he was a believer had long been well known in the town, without affecting his position. Indeed, he not only did not attempt to hide his faith, but preached the gospel in the houses of the principal people of the place. While unbaptized, whatever epithets were applied to him in his absence, he never heard any complaints. But as soon as it was published that he was an applicant for baptism public indignation was too great to remain hidden. He was at once informed that one consequence of

joining the foreigner would be the inevitable termination of his public office. As long as he continued an opium smoker, a gambler and a litigious person, no one ever opposed his representation of the town, but the public profession of the name of Jesus was a crime against one's country, customs and literature which could not be condoned. He consulted his pastor as to what he should do in respect to his office.

The opinion has been very generally entertained among the Chinese that the professors of the Christian religion became the subjects of the country to which the missionary belonged, and would therefore not publicly connect themselves in any way with the Chinese authorities. To remove as far as possible this unfortunate belief, Chiao was recommended to act as representative exactly as before, excepting of course in such matters as might happen to be inconsistent with Christianity. He was also informed that if the connection were broken it had better be by the will of the people rather than by his act. He remained, therefore, at his post, and conducted the public affairs of his clients as before; but when in the city of Liaoyang on his frequent business he preached along with Old Wang in the chapel or among the middle class families.

When the voluntary assessment became payable he went round as usual to collect it. He called on the principal landowner, a Manchu, a graduate and a man of considerable influence, who refused to make any payment. Though well aware of the real cause of refusal, Chiao went again, believing the old gentleman might relent. But instead of paying he summoned several of his underlings, drove Chiao from the house and through the entire length of the town to the poor man's home. By the way he heaped upon him the vilest epithets of which the vernacular admits and ordered his men to strike Chiao's son, 'the young demon,' who had accompanied him; and he was beaten 'black and blue' and hurled violently upon the floor of his father's house. Thus was this man uncomplainingly made a public shame, who a few years ago would have met abuse with fury, and to force would have opposed a spirit which even his chief enemy would have respected. The majority having declared themselves on the side of the persecutor, he had no other alternative than resignation.

This did not terminate his troubles. His business was interfered with and sadly crippled. His oldest son, ashamed of the opprobrious epithets constantly applied to him, and grieved at the loss of the business, which

was now in his hands, turned against his father, who found no peace save when with Old Wang in the chapel. His tormentors were not content to suffer him thus easily to evade the consequences of his action. The chief persecutor, relying upon his widely extended influence, believed he could crush Chiao by litigation. He therefore drew up a long series of accusations against him, and delivered them in person to the Manchu Mandarin of Liaoyang, with whom both accuser and accused were on terms of friendship. This mandarin was thrown into considerable perplexity. Were the administration of law in China free from personal bias and from the influence of the powerful or the wealthy, this and many other cases would be simplified. But when a decision must to a greater or lesser degree partake of a certain amount of partiality and give proof of friendship, lawsuits become more complicated and difficult. Among the charges brought against Chiao were these;—as a public official he had connived at the crime of gambling; he had taken advantage of his position to go to the house of the accuser, with the design of extorting money; and he had sold his country and degraded its customs by joining a foreign heresy.

The other charges Chiao was content to leave in the hands of the magistrate, who was well aware of the

facts, but the last he insisted on having cleared up. He demanded that it be made evident in what way the religion of Jesus could be called a heretical or impure one. Were it indeed so, he was guilty of a crime not only deserving fine or imprisonment, but one which could be appeased only by his death. He was well aware that the son of his accuser was the greatest gambler in the neighbourhood, but that knowledge he kept out of court. To the long arguments of Chiao, and his laborious statements as to what the Christian religion really was, the magistrate made no reply beyond a complaint that an old and respectable man like him should have joined the foreigner.

‘But,’ replied the accused, ‘has not our great Emperor in treaty with foreign nations made it permissible to join the religion of Jesus? And does he not term it in treaty a religion tending to virtue?’

‘Oh,’ retorted the mandarin, ‘you and I know better than that; we are well aware that the treaty was extorted by force.’

This mandarin, though superior in rank to the civil magistrate of Liaoyang, threw the responsibility of the case on that official, on the ground that though the accuser was a Manchu, the accused was a Chinaman. In copying out the indictment against Chiao, he dropped out the charge relating to the foreign

'heresy.' But in presence of his mandarin Chiao insisted on bringing forward that which was the real foundation of the lawsuit, and with respect, but with unswerving resolution, he demanded that his opponent should be made to prove his charge of impurity against this religion. Here, as before the other mandarin, he had frequent opportunities of expounding on his knees—the proper attitude in presence of a mandarin—the principles of Christianity. While the case was before the magistrates Chiao frequently stated in private that his only object in the whole matter was to impress upon the magistrates the truth regarding Christianity. He was warmly supported in his action by Wang in their evening conversations. The mandarin at length ascertained the merits of the case, but, like his Manchu colleague, he ignored the charge of 'heresy.' His decision was not final, but was virtually in Chiao's favour, who was made aware that by following up the case in the line demanded by the mandarin his enemy would be compelled to pay the tax. He chose rather to drop the whole matter. This mandarin has since that period been in Mookden. He is a friend of one of our members, who states that he is thoroughly acquainted with the Old and New Testaments, and secretly a believer in Jesus. Whether he owes this to Chiao or not, he certainly acquired his knowledge

through the chapel in Liaoyang, where Chiao lived and Wang preached.

During the years before his baptism in which he was a believer, and throughout his persecution period, Chiao never ceased imparting Christian instruction to all who would listen. Every evening his inn, when he was at home, was virtually a chapel. No guest went away without hearing, with or without discussion, the doctrines of Christian truth. His walls were covered over with texts or passages of Scripture, or sheet tracts. As not a few scholarly men passed the night in his house on their journeys, he had many a keen combat; but being well versed in the classics he could meet them on their own ground, and often turn their flank in the most unexpected manner. Thus, though many literary men went away unconvinced, and perhaps angry, no one could master Chiao in argument. Of these men several were found to spend the night there frequently, with the evident design of discovering what this Christianity really was against which so many spoke so vaguely. That his lessons were not given in vain is sufficiently attested by the fact that to the south-west of the town, away from the main road, a band of eleven young literates have for years been in the habit of meeting regularly for mutual study of the Scriptures.

In the town of Yentai itself several gave earnest heed to the things spoken by Chiao. The wealthiest man in that neighbourhood was Bai, proprietor of the pawn-shop. He was a man over sixty, a native of Shensi, but has been for many years settled in Yentai with his old wife, the most of their family being still in remote Shensi. He at one time possessed several large places of business in other parts of Manchuria. These were mostly sacked, a dozen years ago, when the province was overrun by robbers. Chiao used the losses as an argument in favour of God's oversight. They were but chastisements of the Heavenly Father to wean the heart of the owner from that wealth which could be thus so easily stripped off him, with the design of raising his thoughts and desires to the endurable riches. This man and his wife listened gladly to Chiao's preaching of a full and free remission of all guilt through the love of God manifested in a crucified Saviour. In his darkest times Chiao was almost every evening at Bai's house at supper, never leaving without worship held with the old people. For years those two people have been known as believers, the woman declaring that the doctrine of salvation is 'far more precious than cart-loads of silver;' but for persons in their position it is very difficult to face the taunts and

evil-speaking connected with the public confession of Christ.

Not long ago a young son of this couple arrived with a grandson from Shensi. The Gospel was preached to the new arrivals, and they 'heard it gladly.' Whether the son will retain his impressions, or whether, like so many in this province, the jeers of companions or the angry remonstrances of older friends will turn him back, remains to be seen. A few days after their arrival, on the night of the Sabbath, the darkness of one end of Chiao's inn was lit up with two great candles of red—the festive colour—and old Bai with Chiao's son-in-law were baptized, the inn guests forming most of the congregation. That son of Chiao who drove him from home is an applicant for baptism. Half-a-dozen of Bai's subordinates are also applicants. Bai's wife postponed her baptism till the following spring, when several women belonging to Chiao's family were to have been received into the Church.

The former persecutor of Chiao and his abettors have come to the conclusion that Christianity is the true religion. They have seen Chiao the opium smoker destroy his pipe, the gambler forsake his tables, the litigant become a peaceful subject, and the revengeful and resentful man endued with an all-

enduring patience. In that town there is none who speak against the religion of which Chiao was a member. The old man was afterwards an agent of Mr. Webster's in Tieling, where he acted with fortitude in troublous times. One of the most influential men in his neighbourhood said that 'had Chiao been a man like other men before conversion, Christianity would not now have the credit which the great change wrought in him has secured.'

Yentai, being an isolated case, will illustrate the manner in which Christianity is sown here, and how, like the thistle-down, it is borne to other hearts and other localities by the life-giving Breath and the instrumentality of men like Wang. In all this work done and going on in Yentai the foreign missionary was unable from the circumstances of the case to take any other part than that of guiding from a distance.

It is with deep regret that the death has to be announced of both Chiao and his convert Bai, of whom, because of his considerable influence, great things were rightly expected. They had both had their constitutions undermined by opium, and, sad though it be, it is true that reformation by renunciation of the pipe, though of some little benefit in the possible prolongation of life, has no influence in removing the

miserable effects already wrought in the system. Indeed, in some cases total abstinence from opium is inadvisable, as it would but hurry the patient to immediate death. The Church has throughout China set its face against the evil, because the native members know, and acknowledge even more than the foreign missionary, the deplorable degradation of both mind and body which results from even its moderate use.

CHAPTER VII.

OLD WANG AS A PREACHER.

THOSE who associate the word 'preaching' in China with the decorous monologue of sermonizing in Christian lands, where the sound of the voice of the preacher is broken only by a sigh of acquiescence or a yawn of languor, can form no conception of what it is as applied to the proclamation of the Gospel in a public chapel in a heathen city. The shops of Manchuria consist of three walls, and a front of movable boards, usually painted black. These boards are pulled down and laid aside at the rising of the sun, and as soon as the sun disappears are with loud clatter placed in their groove, barred and bolted for the night. During the day the front is therefore all door, if a portion of the space is not blocked by a counter.

Our chapels are all houses which were shops, and are retained in their original condition, partly to save expense and partly to prevent occasion of prejudice against us. For a good deal of trouble has arisen in some parts of China from the determination of the foreign missionary to build a house in foreign style in which to preach. The front rooms are converted into one large room, with movable forms. From interest or curiosity the forms exposed to the public view are soon occupied. The countryman who has sold his grain, the traveller with his bedding on his back, the coolie with his empty grain-bag on his arm, the shop boy with his parcel in his hand, and the idler displaying his two-feet-long ebony pipe and embroidered tobacco pouch, are seated side by side. - Occasionally an elderly matron may be seen standing near the door. Street loungers stand at the threshold or seat themselves near the door, while those who desire to learn approach close to the preacher.

These last never utter a word. The hearer stands or sits just as long as convenience, curiosity, or interest inclines him to do. The preacher occupies a wooden platform raised a foot above the floor, so as to be seen of all. Neither singing nor public prayer precedes his address. He begins in any way

he believes calculated to induce the people to listen ; as 'We Chinese are much given to the worship of idols,' or 'We in China pride ourselves on being the best and wisest of all peoples, requiring no instruction from outsiders,' or 'Our sage says so and so,' or 'You are curious to know why we are here,' or any other of a hundred ways by which he may attract the ear of the listener. But whatever the sentiment be with which he starts, the preacher has rarely five minutes of uninterrupted speech. One objects to the sentiment expressed, or to the mode in which it is presented ; another resents the teaching of morality to so highly educated a people as the Chinese ; another angrily shouts, 'We will have no traitors here.' Occasionally, though not often, idolatry is defended, as the people 'do not worship the image, but the god represented by the image.' Sometimes it is the argument of Demetrius, the silversmith of Ephesus. But the most frequent and the wildest denunciations—for such they must be called—arise from the belief already referred to, that Christianity is a form of proselytism inaugurated by Western nations, as the only way by which they can secure an entrance into the country. For China being the 'Flowery Kingdom,' the 'Celestial Empire,' is naturally the desire of all nations, who, if the means

were available, would gladly take instant possession; and the well-known history of Cochin China and Tonquin give point to their belief.

The main burden of every recent convert's preaching is iconoclastic—'down with the idols.' They gradually learn that there are better modes of teaching. Personally I have never seen the utility of a pugilistic attitude, even towards idolatry. Let the subject be faced dispassionately when necessary; but it appears to me that of far greater importance is the positive inculcation of truth, the reception of which inevitably involves the destruction of error. Old Wang began his public teaching in great ignorance of many important Christian principles. But he was one to make good use of careful teaching. His preaching was essentially practical. Any problem, theological or metaphysical, which had no direct practical influence upon character or conduct, had no claims upon his attention or thought. One Supreme Ruler, a just Judge, and one Revealer of and Mediator with the Father, together with the 'powers of the world to come,' were the chief points of his teaching; the mercy of God in the plan of salvation his favourite theme. In his preaching he made frequent reference, like revival preachers, to his own past life and misconduct. His practical acquaintance with the extor-

tions of mandarin followers and the trickery of merchandise he made an argument in behalf of Christianity, which had saved him from these. His references were always made in the spirit of Paul, 'He saved me, the chief of sinners; no one is therefore beyond the power of His grace.'

Behind the main shop buildings which face the street, and separated from them by a space of ten or twenty feet, forming a court, are the back premises, usually less ornate than the front, and of a style which is generally altogether inferior. Here are the *kangs*, where the shopmen sleep, and where stores of goods are usually kept. As even the smaller shops have all this 'back room' accommodation, the places rented for chapels necessarily possess this addition, which is not only useful but indispensable, for it is at once the bed of the chapel-keeper and preacher, and their kitchen as well. As it forms a portion of every household in Northern China, it may as well be described.

On entering this back room one perceives a platform covered with a straw-plaited mat running along one side of the room against the whole length of one wall. Several bundles are seen placed against the wall. These bundles are composed of a felt rug enclosing the bed-clothes, for the platform is the bed

by night and the sitting-place by day of the inmates. One bundle for each individual sleeping on that platform is unrolled at night as the party is about to retire to rest, and rolled up in the early morning as soon as he rises. The platform seems to be a solid mass, but it is so only in appearance. It stands nearly two feet high, is six feet wide, with a strong piece of wood running along its edges. This wood is there to protect from friction the mud which forms the coating under the straw mat and over the bricks of which the platform is built.

One end of the platform is built on to the end of the house, but the other end is terminated by a great iron boiler from three to six feet in diameter. Under the boiler, which is laid and fixed on a brick support, is a large hole, into which through the front of the brick support is a small opening. By this small opening the hard, tough, dry stalks of the twelve-foot high millet are thrust, and the fire from them makes a great heat. This heat boils the water in the boiler, and in or over this boiling water all the family cooking is done.

But the influences of the burning fuel are by no means exhausted in the operation of cooking. The flame and heated smoke rush past the boiler through an aperture into five or six flues which run the whole

length of the *kang*, as the apparently solid platform is called. In these flues the flame and heated smoke linger, and after exhausting all its heat-giving power, the cooled smoke finds an exit by another single aperture, into which the flues converge in the end of the *kang* furthest from the boiler, communicating with the chimney.

This is, we suppose, the most economical conceivable mode of heating the room. When the temperature outside is for a month little above zero, when doors and windows are far from being as neatly fitted into their posts and lintels as could be wished, when fuel is expensive and money scarce, it will be at once evident that our Western mode of heating would entail a heavy expenditure. The Chinaman, so clever in devising schemes to pass life on littles, did not fail to meet this heating difficulty. So, instead of endeavouring to heat the air of the whole room, as we do, he heats his bed. And if during the day he feels the cold, or when he wishes to have a chat with a friend, or desires to eat his frugal meal, he simply drops off his felt shoes beside the *kang*, sits cross-legged, tailor-fashion, on the warm mat, covering his thickly-stockinged feet with his robe. Except in the rooms of the moneyed classes, who can afford to burn charcoal in their brazen basins, the

air in a Chinaman's room is not by any means close in winter.

Such is the character of the apartment repeatedly mentioned here as the 'back room.' Here in this simply-furnished room did Wang sit, lie down, eat, and discourse to inquiring friends when he was not in the public chapel in front. His *kang* could usually sleep four men, and rarely was a place vacant. The Chinese are naturally given to hospitality, and as Christianity had not minimized this national characteristic in Wang, he rarely ate a solitary meal.

In the forenoon, while the front chapel was closed, the 'back room' was always open to visitors. The doors of the public chapel were opened about three in the afternoon. Here Wang spoke daily one or two hours, other speakers occupying a few hours more. Almost every day after the conclusion of the public preaching, some of those who thus listened retired to the 'back room,' to learn more minutely by friendly questioning of the doctrines to which they had listened in public. Scarcely a day passed without questions in the public chapel, but these were almost invariably of a carping and inimical character. How many thousands have passed through the 'back room' it is impossible to guess, but that the lessons which have for years been imparted there are having

their leavening influence all over the province is undoubted. The interest of many in Christian truth is initiated in the public chapel, and by its means the tone of general hostility has been abolished ; but of those who have become publicly professing Christians there are few if any who have not had the greatest part of their Christian education in the 'back room.' Many have to go there for months for instruction, and whether by personal dealing or in 'family worship,' they there attain the amount of knowledge which we desiderate before administering baptism.

When not disturbed by angry exclamations Wang's preaching in public was gentle, kindly, even beseeching, showing in voice and manner a warm, sympathetic heart, and a yearning over the souls of men. His manner with young men was specially engaging ; hence most of his converts were of this class. When unworthy motives were ascribed to him for 'joining the foreigner' his voice became indignant and his words scathing. He spoke always as one having authority, as one who spoke his soul's beliefs. Though not himself a scholar, in the sense of having a thorough acquaintance with Chinese literature, his very acknowledgment of inferiority to his gainsaying opponents was itself an argument in his favour. No

man, whatever his pretensions to scholarship, could secure the mastery over Old Wang in discussing Christian doctrines. It was equally difficult to sustain charges against his patriotism, for to the end he was in all things a Chinaman, save in what was implied in and flowed from the new life in Christ.

Of preaching he was never weary. It was to him no formal matter, to be taken up at a certain hour and dropped when the hour was gone. His public preaching was but a small portion of his teaching. By day or night, from sunrise to midnight, if he found a listener, would he speak of the soul, its salvation, and its duties. On one occasion in one of his letters he lamented the want of opposition, blaming his own unfaithfulness as the only cause of such peace on the part of the powers of darkness. On another occasion, three missionaries, two of whom he had never seen before, walked into the midst of a crowded congregation at Liaoyang. As his eye alighted on the new arrivals making their way through the crowd into the back room, it beamed with pleasure. With a warm smile he turned towards them, bowing gracefully, and then continued his discourse, instead of abruptly concluding, to wait upon them, as many would have done. A young missionary for whose warmth of heart and earnestness of purpose he entertained both

respect and affection, called in at his chapel on the way to Mookden. Old Wang, with the usual pleasure with which he welcomed a pastor, at once produced teapot and green tea to refresh the traveller. While the water was aboiling a man came into the front chapel to buy a Christian book costing something under one penny. Wang went with the book to the man, and in his eagerness to expound the way of salvation continued to preach to him long after the water had boiled, teapot and tea having been entirely forgotten.

Personally, I have always in theory regarded the private and direct dealing with the Chinaman as far the best means of gaining him over to the truth. I had, it is true, at one time great faith in the possibility of converting the Chinese by the silent influence of books, apart and away from the living voice, which subsequent experience has, however, failed to justify. Books may, and do occasionally, rouse as much interest as leads isolated individuals to the missionary for information, but their utility is greatest in the wake of the preacher, where the living voice has created the desire for more complete knowledge. In the same manner my personal experience does not lead to the conclusion that public chapels, or street preaching, which is practically the same thing, are of

themselves and alone the best mode of conducting mission work. But my experience unequivocally proclaims the public chapel to be the best possible mode of attracting attention to and of demanding an examination into Christian truth. The public chapel is the best feeder for personal dealing, it is out of sight the most useful and popular road to the 'back room.'

It was in the back room that Wang most particularly showed his power. There the voice of conflict was hushed. There mind was revealed to mind, and heart spoke to heart. It was Wang's joy to meet the mentally troubled, and to direct them to the way of peace. Sweetness and light were the atmosphere of the back room. And how many hundreds there obtained light, and had their wilderness Marah converted into the sweetness of God's own garden! In that room and under those influences were made manifest as nowhere else Wang's undoubting faith in the Gospel, his entire assurance of its infallible efficacy in curing all diseases of the soul, and it was delightful to see his ever-pleasant smile as he unravelled the difficulties of his 'friend' or 'brother.' Nothing could be more gentle or attractive than his manner with the inquirers of the 'back room.' He was all kindness,

but it was not the kindness of weakness, but blent with that kind of authority which results from unquestioning assurance of the truth, and therefore the strength of his own position. To be sought out in the late evenings by men desiring to know about Christian truth was to him the greatest conceivable pleasure. For though his discourse was then frequently interrupted, it was only to ask questions in order clearly to understand, or to make objection in a friendly way against what was generally and publicly believed to be erroneous doctrine. These inquirers felt perfect freedom in stating as plainly as they chose the arguments against Christianity which fill the air. But there was neither cause nor occasion in the 'back room' for angry discussion. The men who objected in a hostile spirit always betook themselves to the public chapel, never to the private room. Indeed, there is every reason to believe that more permanent and fruitful work has been done by the native preachers in the evenings after the lamp was lit, than by the more formal preaching in the public chapel with its noise of battle and its confusing dust of misrepresentation.

Perhaps, however, the zeal and earnestness of this man appeared most of all when he was by sickness laid on his brick *kang*. There he lay groaning in his

weakness, yet let a stranger but come in, he would begin with his gasping breath first to make friendly inquiries about the visitor, and then to preach to him. At first he remained lying down and spoke in broken sentences, but his subject soon mastered pain and weakness both, and his warm, earnest nature pressed itself upon the stranger to teach him the things which belonged to the saving of the soul. Then, in his excitement, he would sit up and speak continuously. But when finished he had to throw himself down, thoroughly prostrated and gasping for breath.

It is well known that many Europeans in China and not a few professing Christians in Britain disbelieve in the reality of the conversion to Christianity of a people like the Chinese. The former will not take the trouble to examine into the truth or falsehood of their statements, the latter are too far away to see for themselves. But had either the one or the other, however desirous to find their belief sustained, heard and seen Old Wang preach to his countrymen, though unable to understand a word of his speech, it may be doubted whether they could go away retaining their opinion. His fervour was such as only that man can possess who thoroughly believes what he speaks. When latterly he was contradicted or opposed, his

voice rose somewhat above his ordinary earnest tone, with increase of ardour, however, not of anger, for he would smile at his angry opponent and say that he was himself at one time of the same mind, 'in the days of his blindness.' As might be expected, his teaching as time went on was less combative and more instructive.

It will naturally be asked, What is the visible product of all this? When, in 1872, I began to move among the people in Manchuria, it appeared that the name of our Saviour was known only by means of the Roman Catholics, whose conduct was publicly said to have made it a reproach. The prejudices thus begotten had first to be overcome. And when it is stated that since then about 800 people have openly by baptism acknowledged themselves believers in Jesus, it will be seen that preaching has not been a vain toil. To the direct influence of the foreign missionary no more than a dozen of these owe their conversion. They are the fruit of the public and private teaching of several men, of whom Wang was first. Ten times that number will not include all those who have come to understand and respect the doctrines of Christianity. Not a small proportion of the province has learned that Jesus is not the king of a Western Power, who sends

agents to corrupt the minds of Chinese. This negative result is itself a great gain which will aid the more rapid extension of the kingdom of our Lord in the not remote future.

CHAPTER VIII.

WANG'S LAST DAYS.

THOUGH his opium pipe was quenched in 1873, the poison which for years had been introduced into Wang's system was not ejected. He looked then ten years older than his actual age. His blood had lost and never regained the rich fulness which at forty years old should have been his. The winter's cold pulled him down with asthmatic hand, the summer's heat with fever. Year by year his energy had a shortening period of activity. Lassitude at first confined him to the house during a portion of the two extreme seasons. He was annually compelled to betake himself reluctantly for gradually lengthening terms to his *kang*. The milder weather usually set him on his feet again and enabled him to carry on his much loved work.

The autumn of 1884 left him thin and feeble, in

spite of all tonics, and the keen cold of winter found less difficulty than ever in prostrating him. Spring revived him only so far as to enable him to creep about. He was forbidden to preach in the public chapel, and ordered to confine himself to teaching those who went for private instruction. As even this rest had but small influence for good, he was ordered to Mookden, to be attended by the medical missionary, who had the same kindly regard for him as most men who came in contact with him. He was pronounced very feeble, and little hope was given of his ultimate recovery, which would be all the more difficult, now that the heat of summer was upon us. Here he was again forbidden to preach in public ; but no prohibition was of any avail while he was able to walk.

Almost daily he went to the medical waiting-room and preached to the patients. One day he walked a distance of nearly three miles to one of the city chapels, where he could not but preach. There he became heated. While returning he was overtaken by a shower of rain. That night he was seized by a high fever, which for two days and nights suffered no abatement. 'Other two days of such fever,' said the doctor, 'will kill him.' The fever was thrown off, but so enfeebled and emaciated was he that he did not look

himself. He still smiled, but it was with a ghastly expression. The soul seemed to have shrunk away from his eyes, and the old warmth could not enliven the wrinkled skin.

For some time he had been fed from the missionary's kitchen, with the hope that a more generous diet than the Chinese knew how to use might help him back to us. Leaning on a long staff he crept a little about doors in the morning or cooler evening, but was compelled to lie down with lessening intervals upon his *kang*. By this time he had the appearance of one whose flesh had all withered away. A cough set in, and pieces of lung were expectorated, so that all hope of recovery was fast leaving us, even though the milder weather of autumn was nigh. For a considerable time he had himself renounced the possibility of living. He had often been as weak and helpless, he said, but had never experienced the same feeling. It was with a smile on his thin bloodless lips—for his eyes were beyond smiling now—that he first informed me that he could not live. It was with a forced smile the reply was made that he was in his Heavenly Father's hands. That he knew, and he believed his Father's will was best for him. 'Peace, unbroken peace,' he proclaimed again and again on to his last hours, 'reigned in his heart.'

One day, stating that he was soon to die, he gave most minute directions regarding all he wanted done, forgetting no piece of business which affected others. In this he acted with the tone and manner of one about to take a month's journey. He was now entirely confined to his *kang* with a distressing cough, and attended by his mother, brother and son, who had come from Newchwang for the purpose. In the middle of September, on a hot Sabbath day, he amazed the congregation meeting in the forenoon on the mission premises, by being found outside the chapel door, when we all believed him lying on his *kang*. While he had been able to creep feebly about he was gently blamed for sitting at that door instead of resting on his *kang*. With a quiet smile he said it did him good to be there, to hear and to join with the congregation. He could join in the singing, though his voice was not able to sing. But on this particular day he was found standing, leaning on his staff, and with glazed eyes and lips too bloodless to show any expression, he was evidently under pressure of great mental excitement, preaching to the amazed people as they were going out by the door. So great was his excitement that he would not desist from his slowly enunciated speech, nor without the exertion of a good deal of force would he seat himself. 'This

is the last opportunity I shall have of speaking to you,' he was heard to say. He then applied some part of the sermon which seemed to have touched him deeply, exhorting all to a life of true faith in the Son of God. 'I know,' he said slowly, looking upwards with his expressionless, half-dead face, 'that it is heaven for me. I understand now the Gospel of grace. It is heaven for all who sincerely believe, but they must believe sincerely; you must be real believers, nominal Christians cannot enter heaven. The unbeliever is eternally lost.' Thus he went on for some time, when a young missionary standing by with his eyes full of tears,—as were those of many more—said in moving away from the affecting sight, 'Isn't it grand?' The old dying man went on in the same style and strain for some time, stating that it was only now he fully understood the Gospel and the pastor who preached it. After many ineffectual efforts to make him rest he said—and the words seemed dropping from the lips of the dead—'It is finished.' Sitting down, he then ordered all within hearing of his voice to 'declare to them all,' referring to the rest of the members, the dying testimony he had just made.

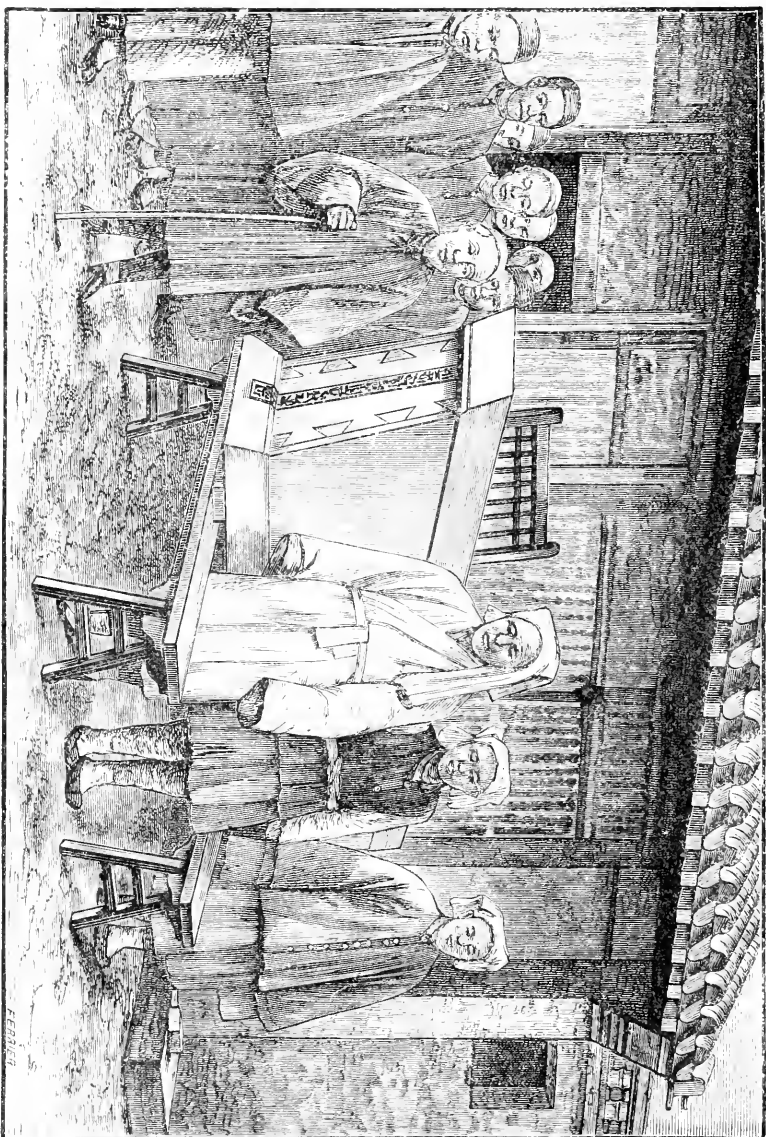
On the day before his death, when every breath seemed as if it must be his last, his eyes fixed and his

lips semi-glued to his exposed teeth, he gasped out slowly syllable by syllable, referring to great pains he was then enduring, 'This is not grief, it is mercy,' 'This trouble is only purifying my body,' 'Mercy of the Father, merit of the Son, purifying of the Holy Spirit,' 'All is peace.'

It is the universal custom in China when death is evidently at hand, to dress the all but unconscious sufferer in the richest new robes which the survivors can afford to purchase. The belief underlying this practice is that the spirit is clad in the other world with the same quality and kind of clothing in which it abandons the body. The loving care of those left behind is therefore exerted to ensure to the spirit a higher degree of respectability than he had enjoyed in this world. According to the exceptionless custom, Old Wang's clothing had been purchased and made, and he was asked while he could yet speak whether he would be clad in these. His reply—a beautiful commentary on the New Testament doctrine—was, 'Jesus is my new robe.'

Thus passed away Old Wang from the work he loved so well, and in which he was never weary, his body one of the innumerable wrecks of opium, his spirit entering another world after having 'put on Jesus,' his new robe of righteousness. Half a year

had scarcely gone since with bitter tears and groans and wailing which could not be controlled, he stood beside the dead body of another faithful, able, and successful preacher, a convert of his own, and a man much younger in years. His own mother, whom he had brought to Jesus, similarly weeping and wailing, followed his unwieldy coffin to the lowly grave, into which it was lowered by the hands and with the tears of many who were by his means brought 'from darkness unto light.' God in His mercy raise multitudes of such men in China! Then will appear the dawn of the day when the Chinese children shall become sons of God.



OLD WANG'S COFFIN, WITH MOTHER AT ONE END, BROTHER AT THE OTHER, AND SON
IN FULL MOURNING IN FRONT.

CHAPTER IX.

NATIVE AGENCY IN CHINESE MISSIONS.

IN this critical age, when every institution must give satisfactory reasons for permission to obtain a further tenure of life, it is no matter of surprise that the subject of a native agency in preaching the Gospel, and its support by the churches of lands other than those in which such agency is engaged, should be made to pass under review and close examination. From what I have heard or can learn of the various theories regarding the subject, there seems to be some confusion of thought, which if cleared up might tend to simplify the problem and cast some light on the proper mode of dealing with it.

As the subject is one involved in the history of Old Wang, who was himself an agent paid by funds from

a country to which he did not belong, I believe it is justifiable for me here to state more fully and formally what I consider to be the truth as to the character, the aims, the need, and the support of native agency in the establishment and propagation of Christianity in non-Christian lands.

The chief difficulty connected with this subject felt by the general Christian public centres around the funds collected for the propagation of Christianity and their proper allocation. Now, the design of the Church in collecting moneys for mission work and in establishing agencies for their distribution is not, it seems to me, the providing of situations in non-Christian countries for a number of more or less educated fellow-countrymen of the donors. The design is to preach the 'Good News' of the 'kingdom of God' where it is unknown. The real problem then is, How the Church can utilize the means at its disposal to the greatest possible advantage,—how these funds can be so expended as to make the deepest possible impression and produce the widest possible influence for good. With regard, therefore, to the moneys collected, we should dismiss from our minds the word 'foreign'—the location of the country in which the money is collected having nothing to do with the question of its most useful

expenditure. What must be borne in mind is the purpose for which the money has been collected.

Not an inconsiderable moiety of the money collected for missionary purposes in the Christian Church is expended on education and the healing of the sick. The only conceivable apology for this expenditure is that these two subjects are in some way believed to be subsidiary and helpful to Christian preaching. Though these two subjects are, from a philanthropic point of view, excellent ends in themselves, the Christian Church as such does not so regard them. Education *quâ* education, or the healing of the sick *quâ* medical work, are quite beyond the scope of the Church's design ; and mere philanthropy apart from aggressive Christianity has not yet established its own missions. It finds so much to do with criticizing, that for collecting or subscribing money it has insufficient leisure. The money collected by the Christian Church has one great object in view—that which we call by the frequently misunderstood name of conversion. This does not mean the transference of so many people from Buddhist to Christian ranks ; it does not signify a change, but the transformation, of character. It means that the opium-smoker shall learn to abstain, the thief shall become an industrious citizen, the liar a man of truth, the cheat honest, the

unclean pure, the drunkard sober, the fierce man gentle, the selfish a man who learns to be concerned about the welfare of others. It means a turning round upon one's former self. The old man is cast aside and a new man formed. The man has to be re-formed or trans-formed.

It requires no great knowledge of human nature and no deep acquaintance with the results of mere learning, to become convinced that no amount of education and no amount of physical comfort or discomfort can of themselves effect this conversion. The most accurately systematic knowledge of moral truth, the keenest insight into its beauty, and the most unquestioned ability to expound it to others, are, in the West no less than in the East, quite compatible with a vicious life. Lack of knowledge has led no man who was born in a Christian country into the ways of evil. It is not, therefore, clearness of intellectual vision alone which guides a man to be either a new or a true man. Conduct, we know, is affected more by the heart than the head. 'Out of the heart are the issues of life.'

The Chinaman has been instructed as a babe at his mother's knee to bow to the image of this god and to honour the name of that idol. The affections of his heart are trellised round these images, and the power of custom has hardened their hold with his

growing years. The all-important question in missions is, therefore, how to gently unwind these heart affections and re-entwine them round the living and the deathless that will never crumble away. How can we gain access to and move the hearts of the Chinese people so that they may become new men? You may indeed by your logic destroy his idols and lead him to question much of what he has believed. But is he the better man because he ceases to burn incense or prostrate himself once a year in the temples? You desire him to become a new man—not merely to put off Buddha, but to put on Christ. And in order to do this his heart must be won. With the battering-ram of your superior knowledge you may with little difficulty knock down the intellectual fort, but, as we may learn from India, you are far yet from the citadel of the heart. And it is through the heart alone that the change we seek is to be effected. Intellectual training and other philanthropic agencies will pave the way to a certain extent. They will help in pulling down and clearing away in whole or in part the rubbish of the old building, but they cannot lay even the foundation of the new. All our experience proves that it is the old story of the ‘love of Christ which passeth knowledge’ alone which will effect the change. Thus alone does morality become

an authoritative master, because the expression of the will of the living and all-holy God, who is most distinctly realized in Him who came to reveal the Father.

Now, were the foreigner in China exactly circumstanced as was Paul in Asia Minor, there would be little question as to what was the best mode for preaching this life-producing love. The foreign missionary, however, occupies a position totally different from and much more difficult than did Paul. He is the object of a personal hostility. The hatred is not against the message, but against the messenger. He is a foreigner. The mere fact that his language is of pronunciation which seems peculiar to Chinese ears, is, if understood, in itself an attraction, but everything else about him tends to raise in arms against him the affections of the Chinese. His doctrine, his speech, his manner, his very presence, call in question the hitherto unquestioned superiority of the Chinese, whose pride is therefore offended. He is the representative of China's humiliation in war, and above all he is the embodiment of all the Chinaman has ever heard of foreigners, and on account of which he unhesitatingly applies to them the name 'Barbarian.' In the remotest corner and the mountain solitude, where a whisper from the great world outside is breathed perhaps but once a

year, no less than in the busy city and the open port, the foreigner is the frequent subject of conversation. And it need scarcely be stated that not the excellences, but the defects, not the natural, but the *outré* and outrageous characteristics of foreigners form the staple of gossip. The foreigner even by his fellows is not always credited with a life of remarkable sanctity ; and what one foreigner does of evil is not only set down to all foreigners, but by repetition the evil is exaggerated tenfold, for it is not in the West alone that crows become the more numerous the further the story about them extends. The presence of a foreigner preaching Christianity embodies to the Chinaman all the grotesque stories and vicious conduct ascribed to foreigners. The Chinese know by daily experience that men whose mouths are full of wisdom and resonant with grand truths may be villains in their conduct as cruel as highway robbers, for the whited sepulchre which within is full of all uncleanness is well known in China. All this creates a not easily overcome prejudice against the foreign preacher, to whom is invariably ascribed designs and objects other than his professed ones.

Now against the native preaching the same doctrines, most of these objections do not exist, while all are greatly modified. Hence it requires little insight to

perceive that notwithstanding his greater learning and higher training, the foreigner labours, to begin with, under disadvantages to which the native is not subjected. Then again, though the street and his chapel are open to the foreigner, the homes of the people are sealed against him, while the native, even though a stranger, may have free admittance. Yet again, when a Chinaman is preaching to his fellows, whether in units or hundreds, the hearers are incomparably more ready to express what disapprobation they feel against the doctrine, or to state the objections which in their hearts they entertain, and are thus more easily and closely dealt with, while those desirous to learn further state without difficulty their questions and wants to the native, as they never will be induced to do to the foreigner. It is after opposition gives place to interest, and indifference to the desire for full instruction, that the foreigner finds it easy to grapple closely with the inquirer's mind. For initiating Christian work, therefore, the native has many advantages over the foreigner, and that he can utilize them well let every successful mission reply.

But not for the work of initiation only is the native Christian better adapted than is the foreign preacher. How the work of strengthening weak and isolated Christians, of helping in their faith

struggling companies of believers remote from the missionary and from mission stations, of following up and watering into healthy plants the good seed sown and carried away where the poverty of its spiritual environment would cause its untimely death,—how this work can be satisfactorily carried on without the aid of native Christians is more than I can see.

Then what of the future? Is the Chinese Church to be always dependent on foreign Churches? If foreigners had to leave China, is it not desirable that the converts should be able, as in Madagascar, to carry on the work? Can this ever be if the natives are not trained to preach independently of the foreigner? How without natives able to preach and employed in public preaching will the Chinese Church ever become any other than a rickety child always carried about by a nurse? No infant ever took to running on its feet by unceasing careful nursing on his mother's knee. And what though in the act of learning to walk he fall occasionally? He must be encouraged and taught to walk more steadily.

From all these considerations the desirability of employing native agents in preaching the Gospel seems to me to be not so much a matter for question-

ing as one dependent on the possession by the missionary of ordinary common sense. It is difficult for me to understand how any sane man, desiring the most effective means of spreading widely and rapidly the knowledge of the Gospel, can stumble over the 'native agent.'

But here presses upon us the question—What native will you set apart for this work? Is the fact that he is a professed believer of itself adequate to entitle any man to be nominated a public preacher? Or, if a selection is to be made, by what principles are you to test your candidates? Will you place chief reliance upon his scholarly attainments, his social position, or his zealous spirit? There are, I understand, some people who have even been face to face with mission work who have learned so little from experience that they are actually sufficiently hardy to proclaim in Christian lands their belief that 'any one' who is a believer in Jesus is quite adequate for the work of the missionary. How these men must pity the simplicity of the apostle Paul with his cry—'Who is sufficient for these things?' Such men, if they possess as much logical ability as to draw a conclusion from given premises, must believe that any Chinaman who is a believer is quite competent to carry on the work of public

preacher. But as my experience, limited to a small field though it be, leads me to the unquestioning belief that very few foreigners are fully qualified to be missionaries to the Chinese, so must I refuse to believe that more than a fractional proportion of Chinese converts are qualified to become public preachers. The many-gift-bestowing Spirit imparts among others the gift of teaching, and it seems to me unpardonable presumption to thrust others than these into the office of public teacher. Every Chinaman who is an earnest Christian will not fail to instruct others in Christian truth.

But the many who are sufficiently qualified to instruct by broken conversation are wholly unfitted to meet the gainsaying of the adversary, to solve the questionings of the interested inquirer, and to remove the objections of those who are willing but find it difficult to become believers. Only those able to do this latter work, whether foreigners or natives, are fitted to become public preachers. And as I deprecate the constant outcry for more missionaries, irrespective of the quality of the men, so do I regard it as injurious to the cause we have at heart to stamp with the seal of the Church to the office of public teacher a man who, while earnest and admirably qualified to spread Christian doctrine in a private manner, is

not sufficiently strong by education, natural talent, or wise enthusiasm to hold his own against the enemy, or to give calmly, judiciously, and unanswerably, amply convincing 'reason for the hope that is in him.' The preacher should be one—and he only should be preacher—who is endowed with the 'spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind,' or of good sanctified common sense.

I desiderate, therefore, as public teacher the man who ranges not below, but who, if possible, is above the average intellectual talent, and one whose natural talents have passed through the fire of faith, and come out a newly made sword of good steel and brightly burnished and keenly sharpened by the careful, thorough and systematic indoctrination of Christian truth, which he has learned to embody in his daily life as well as in accurate and well-balanced definition. My conviction is that a few of this kind of preacher will produce greater and more lasting effects, and wield an influence more generally permeating all classes of Chinese, than ten times as many of less talented even though equally zealous men. Warmth of heart and clearness of intellect are the *yang* and the *yin* of the Chinese preacher—the positive and negative spiritual electricity, without both of which a powerful battery is not to be hoped for. The first is the more

important, but you must have both. Mere literary attainments are a *sine quâ non* to the book-maker, they are of but subordinate value to the preacher, though of considerable advantage as a subsidiary qualification.

Next falls to be considered the manner in which such men are to be secured, prepared, set to, and kept in the work. They must eat and they must clothe themselves, for in China the life of John the Baptist is impossible, while the Greater than the Baptist set His face against asceticism; and Christianity, while demanding purity of life, does not command the weakening of the body, but does implicitly urge the command, 'Do thyself no harm.' How then is the native preacher to be supported?

There are three conceivable means of support: 1st, a trade or business of some kind, by carrying on of which the agent may support himself and those dependent upon him; 2nd, the possession of private property; and 3rd, dependence upon extraneous sources. The experience of Christendom generally has pronounced the first plan incompatible with the greatest usefulness, as it distracts the preacher's attention for most of his time from his paramount duty—that of preaching or preparing for it. The second and third give him liberty to

devote himself entirely to the work, 'to give himself wholly to these things,' to 'give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching,' to 'be instant in season and out of season' in 'preaching the word,' making this his one business, to the exclusion of all others.

The man, however, who with means of his own is both well qualified and willing to devote himself to public preaching is naturally more rare in China than in the West, though even in the West he is not as 'common as blackberries.' Thus we are thrown upon the third alternative, in order to secure the greatest efficiency of the greatest number of those best qualified to publicly preach the Gospel.

It need scarcely be said that the extraneous sources from which such assistance can be looked for are all embraced within the Christian Church. And by the Christian Church is not signified the Church in China, but the Church of Christ throughout all the world. For nowhere do we find in Scripture any description of a so-called National Church of Christ, nor any principle save that of antagonism to such a narrowing process. The Church of Christ is composed of all believers in Him wherever man lives upon the earth, and her bounds pass freely as the wind over all physical and ethnological barriers by which men set up antagonistic nations. The

Church of Christ is not national, it is cosmopolitan. Those who insist on narrowing it down to the sectarianism of nationality are setting themselves, unconsciously, perhaps, but none the less actually, in opposition to one great design of the establishment of the visible Church—the advent of peace upon earth by the proclamation of the universal brotherhood of man, and by the logically consequent action outflowing from belief in that brotherhood.

Whatever moneys or means are collected in any localized section of the Church of Christ, for the purpose of extending the kingdom of Christ, I cannot consent to call 'foreign.' The question as to the proper source whence the means are to be found for supporting the preacher of the Gospel, whether China, Japan, England or America, is, it seems to me, one of expediency, not of principle. I say, not of principle, for the Church of Christ is one whole, and it is no less right for London or New York to supply the deficiency of Peking than it was for the Churches of Philippi or Corinth to collect for the needs of Jerusalem. No principle lies more plainly exposed on the surface of the Scriptures than that 'those who wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar, and that even so the Lord did ordain that they who proclaim

the gospel should live of the gospel.' Paul and Barnabas were apparently the only notable preachers who were not supported by the apostolic Churches, and Paul warmly commends the poor Church in Philippi because it sent once and again to supply his wants when he was preaching in 'foreign' parts, he himself being to Philippi a 'foreigner.' He declares it a matter only of expediency that he does not press what he considers the right of demanding the Corinthian Church to support or aid in supporting him, though he was to that Church a foreigner.

The matter of principle being, therefore, placed beyond dispute, it may be asked,—What does expediency demand as the best source whence to support such native preachers as are defined above? If the members attached to the Christian Church in China, or any portion of them, are able to contribute in whole or in part to the support of the available preaching talent, it is unquestionably their bounden duty, as it is best for the cause, that they should do so. Why it is better requires here no proof. But if Chinese Christians are not able to support all the preaching talent available, then expediency, principle, the exigences of the case, all demand that means of support be found in other sections of the one Church.

The man who holds that no Chinese preacher should be supported except by means supplied by Chinese converts seems to me worse than rash, to be, indeed, crippling the Church and causelessly hindering the work at its present stage in China. It is difficult, besides, to see any logical reason why such a man accepts money for supporting himself in doing the kind of work for doing which he objects to give a smaller sum to a Chinaman.

The Christian Church in other lands is eager to preach the Gospel to the Chinese. When those other lands support a converted Chinaman able and ready to give himself wholly to this work, they carry out their purpose quite as much as by supporting a native of the contributing country to preach in China. Nay, more, it is not at all unlikely that the small sum it hands over to the Chinese preacher fulfils the purpose of the Church far more efficiently and fruitfully than the comparatively large sum which is handed to the foreigner to enable him to do the work. This, at all events, is my experience. The number of converts drawn in our field directly by foreigners from heathenism into the Christian Church is little more than a dozen, while the number of baptized men and women is well on to a thousand, and the number of secret believers and well-wishers, if I am not misinformed,

exceed that number many times. Now, whatever the foreigner's work in fully instructing these converts, their conversion is traceable directly to native converts. And though not a few of them have been brought in by private converts, the great majority is the product of the public preaching of a few men who, if they had not been supported by means provided by the Church in other lands, could have given but a fraction of their time to preaching, and, what is possibly of greater consequence, could not have secured the leisure by means of which they have attained to the comparatively full knowledge of Christian truth which has made them the useful agents they have proved themselves to be. As far as I am aware, the history of every successful mission in China bears the same testimony to the great value of, and indispensable necessity for native preachers.

The problem before the Church is,—How best, most widely, most rapidly, and most successfully to preach the Gospel to the Chinese. And as soon as the most probably satisfactory agencies are discovered, the question of means to support these agencies is one of very secondary importance. The Christian Church possesses money enough—it does not possess men enough of the right kind. Those who are

tempted to consider the question of mere money one of primary importance in connection with preaching the Gospel, seem to me to be raising money *per se* to an elevation to which it is not entitled. That men ready to sell their lives for money should act thus is matter for no great surprise, nor is it strange that they who consider the 'dollar almighty' should oppose the 'waste' of a few dollars in the process of enlightening the 'darkened minds' of the Chinese. But that any man who professes to believe in the supreme value of the soul, and in the Gospel as the only means of salvation, should deprecate the spending of 'foreign' money in supporting a native agency to do more efficient, useful, and extensive work than could be done without it, is to me matter of wonder.

There are certainly several risks to be carefully guarded against. One is a too easy readiness to confer the title and status of public preacher or evangelist upon considerable numbers, when there is only the smallest fraction capable of discharging properly its duties. Hands should not be laid suddenly on any man, and only the well-proved should be publicly recognized as evangelists. The great majority of native Christians will do better work in carrying on their former avocations in a new

spirit, and in speaking in private as they find opportunity and possess ability. Again, those who are set apart should be sedulously instructed, carefully superintended, and affectionately encouraged in their work. The missionary should also beware of waste in utilizing the funds provided by Western Churches. There are two modes of waste : 1st, supporting men in a certain post for which they are not qualified, which is worse than useless ; 2nd, the paying over of more than is necessary to keep the agent in that degree of comfort and respectability to which his natural endowments entitle him, or of more than what a native church would give from their own collections. He should be kept above want, but he should not have an income appreciably larger than he would obtain in somewhat similar native employment. In the mission field there may possibly have been waste in both these modes. Whether such waste has been of greater extent than the waste of supporting Westerns in the field who are not sufficiently qualified for the work, is a question which need not be discussed. Probably both kinds of waste are, as the world goes, to some extent unavoidable. To begin with, the earnest foreign missionary, even when acting under the influence of the best intentions, will inevitably fall into some mistakes in his engagement or treatment

of native agents. Time is necessary and practical experience ere he be able to form a just estimate of those professed converts whom he desires to employ under or with him. But if there has been abuse in the past it is not reasonable to swing to the opposite extreme of the pendulum and refuse the use. When a man brings upon himself dyspepsia and 'visions of the night' more memorable than agreeable, and when he discovers the cause to be that his appetite was larger than his digestion, his best cure is surely not total abstention from eating, but the exercise of a judicious care in the quality and quantity of his food.

But the kernel of this and of every other difficulty connected with missionary work and agents is to be found not in the foreign, but in the home Church. In the Christian Church the belief is expressed in practice that the more difficult the work to be done by the public minister of the Church the greater should be the ability, the more fervent the spirit, and the more untiring the diligence of that minister. Hence, for the instruction of young men in theological learning, the ablest and most experienced men attainable are carefully sought out and set apart; and even to perform the ordinary Sabbath work of a large and intelligent or wealthy congregation of believers, the

utmost attention is leisurely given to discover that man who gives promise of being possessed of the greater number of the qualifications which are considered essential to an agreeable and successful ministry.

But the most difficult of the problems and the most arduous of the duties connected with Christian work where Christianity is professed, believed, and therefore revered, are in reality light as compared to the duties and problems confronting the man who goes forth to attempt the conversion of a people like the Chinese. Instead, therefore, of men of inferior capacity or even of average ability, no man should be sent to China who is not decidedly above the average intellect. But while this is an indispensable requisite to the successful worker, let it not be supposed that a man of cold heart or of selfish aims is other than entirely out of place among a people like the Chinese. Head and heart, intellect and sympathy, spirituality and reasoning power, combined with a calm patience are absolutely essential to the proper working of this field, the most difficult and the most important in the world. The example of the New Testament, the teachings of experience in all mission fields and times, no less than the demands of common sense, all declaim against the selfishness of the Churches in retaining for their own intellectual delectation the

men best fitted for mission work as it should be carried on, and as it must be conducted to produce the best and greatest results. It is grievous to think of the loss occasioned to the work of converting the world to Christianity by this erroneous course of prudence. To expose the causes and point out possible remedies for this failure in duty lie not within the scope of our present purpose. But it is impossible to abstain from raising a protest against the indifference of the Church, which has left the mission field so long inefficiently occupied. Even a smaller number of missionaries than exists, if as judiciously selected and as jealously scanned for the foreign field as are men for our larger congregations and theological schools, would make a greater impression and produce richer results.

It is by the converted natives of China that the Chinese will become Christian ; but the converts must themselves pass through the instruction and drink in the spirit which only a man of intellect can give, and only a man of loving sympathy is willing to impart. A missionary, in writing not long ago, stated that he had under his supervision fully thirty native agents, who in that year were instrumental in adding hundreds of men and women to the Church. The experience of all successful missionaries in China will, as far as we know

confirm the statement that their success is the success of their native agents.

We are not aware of any foreigner in China who can trace to his direct and immediate agency half as many converts as Old Wang was enabled to 'bring out of darkness into light.' Nor is it necessary to anticipate that men of the highest intellectual acquirements and of the noblest spiritual type in the Church would prove exceptions to those now in the field. It would, however, be reasonable to expect a higher state of efficiency in the native agents trained under their influence and drinking in of their instruction, while their manifest mental superiority would make a favourable impression upon the educated natives. What, therefore, should be looked for with certainty would be greatly increased numbers converted by the agency of these trained native believers; nor would they be, as they mostly are now, confined mainly to the poor, but we would confidently expect converts 'from all ranks and conditions of men.' And before this consummation is attained we may be able to make a slight impression upon the outskirts of the hem of China's garments, but we dare not hope to be able to reach her inmost heart and soul.

Pious readers may perhaps consider this line of argument as one which impiously neglects the most

essential of all conditions to the work of conversion, viz., that of the enlightening and enlivening Spirit of God. Not only, however, is this kept fully in view, but an appeal is confidently made for ample confirmation of the accuracy of our demand to all Church history, from the time of Moses down to the present day. An intellectual weakling was not employed to propound the Law from Sinai, nor was a man of poor intellect chosen as any of the vehicles through whom exhortations and prophecies were proclaimed to Israel and Judah. Balaam and Jonah were of apparently weak moral character, but there is no evidence to show that even they were of narrow mental capacity. Is it needful to point out that of the Apostles those were the most successful who gave evidence of being intellectually as well as spiritually the strongest men? And what of mediæval and modern missions? Do they not all without a single exception preach forth with loudest voice the same doctrine? As God demanded from Israel the choice of the flock for His service, so has He ever claimed the choicest men for His work, and even so does He claim them now.

The most important and the most difficult work under the care of His Church to-day is the leading forth of the heathen out of the Egypt of their hopeless darkness into the Promised Land of His joyous

light, and the best, the ablest, the noblest in the Church are required for the work. Already has the day dawned, but the full brightness will shine forth only when the Church's selfishness is converted into self-sacrifice, and when the clamant claims of sect are drowned by the trumpet calls of the commands of Him 'whose right it is to reign.'

THE END.



THE
RELIGIOUS
TRACT SOCIETY'S
LIST
OF BOOKS.
FOR PRESENTATION.



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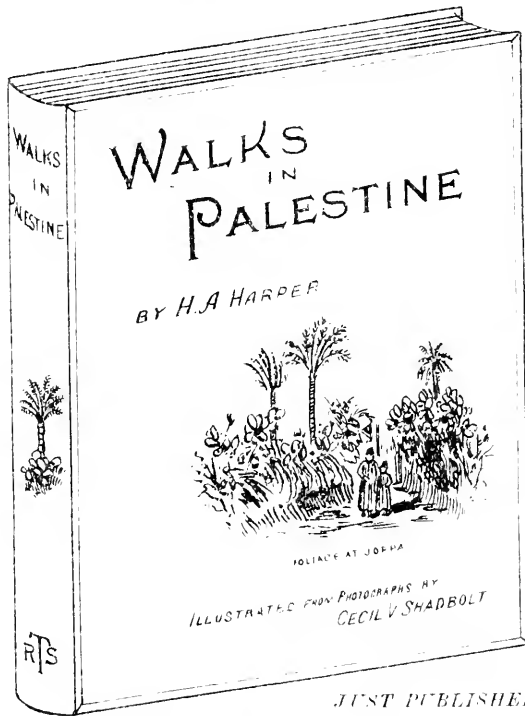
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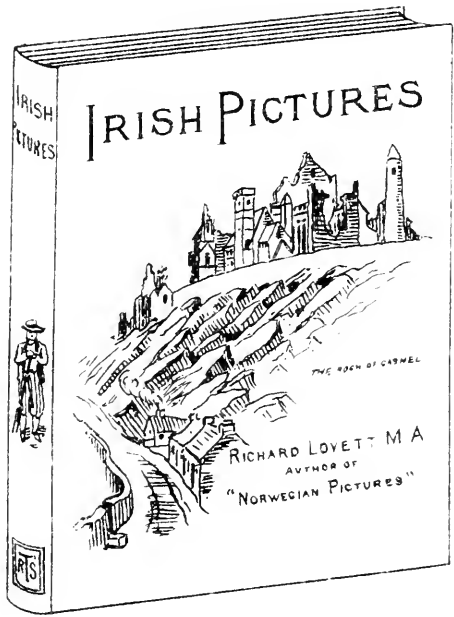
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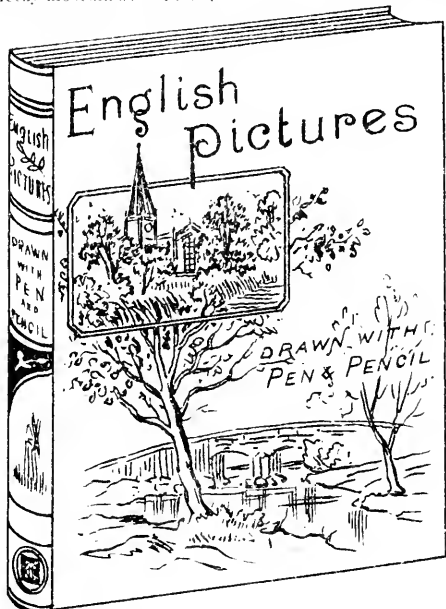
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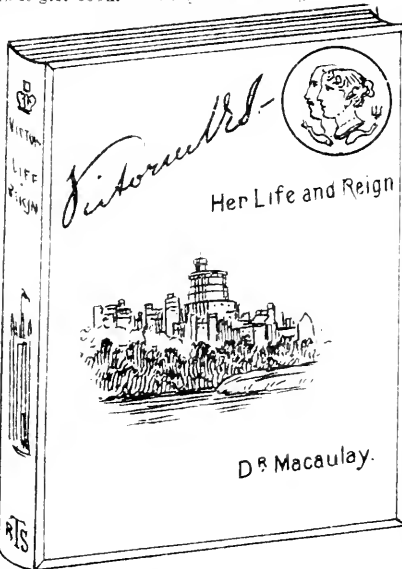
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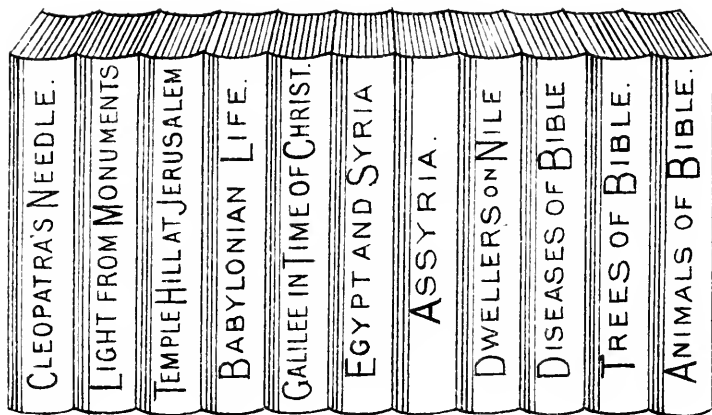
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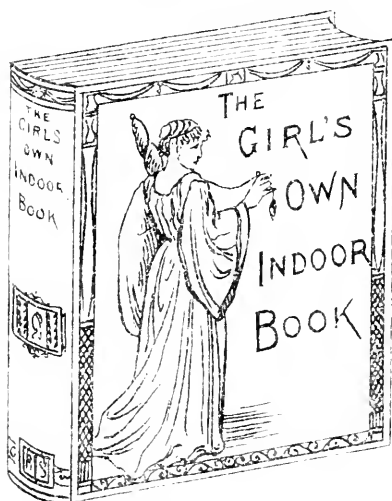
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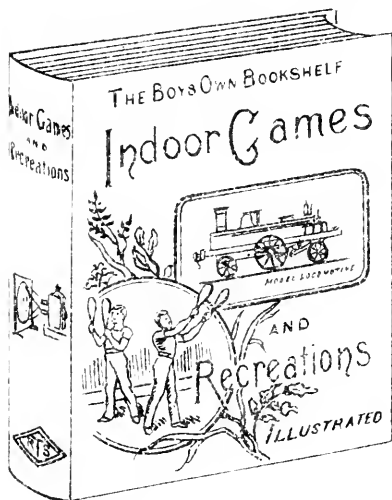
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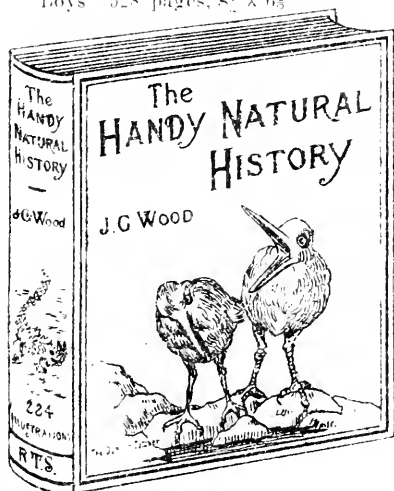


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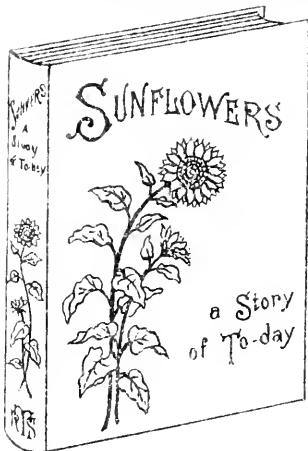
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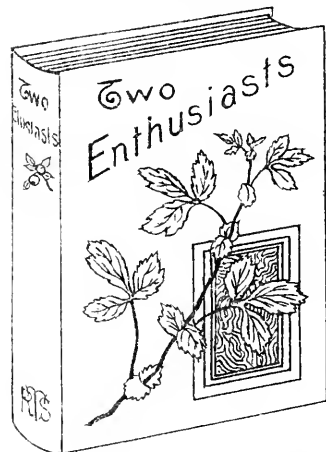
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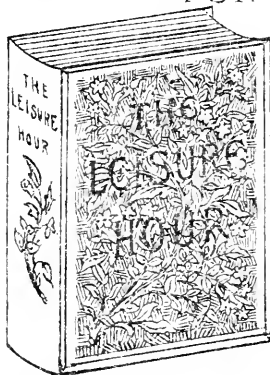
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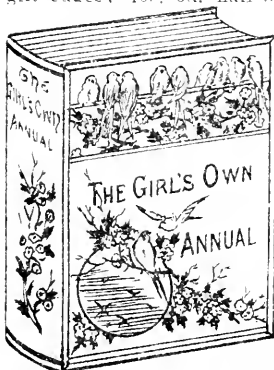
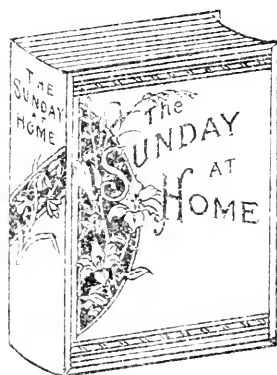
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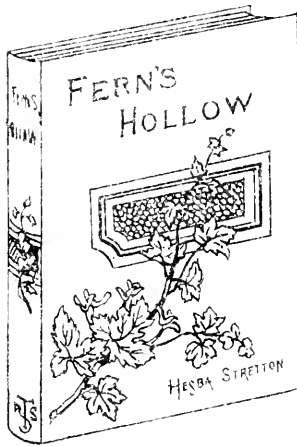
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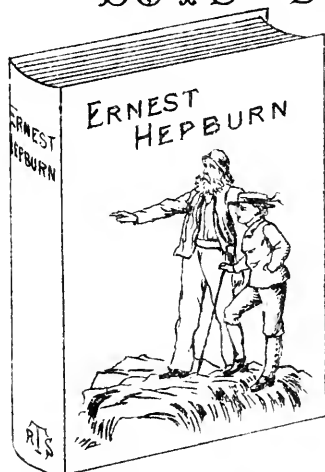
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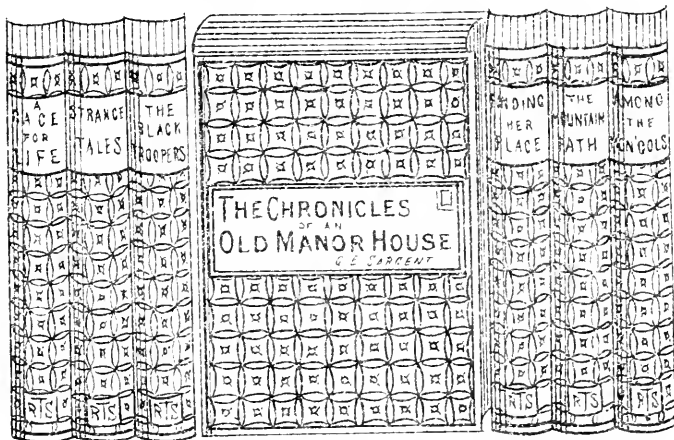
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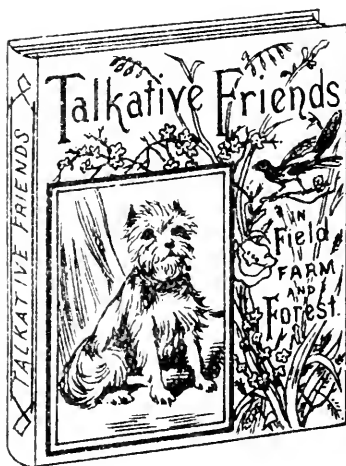
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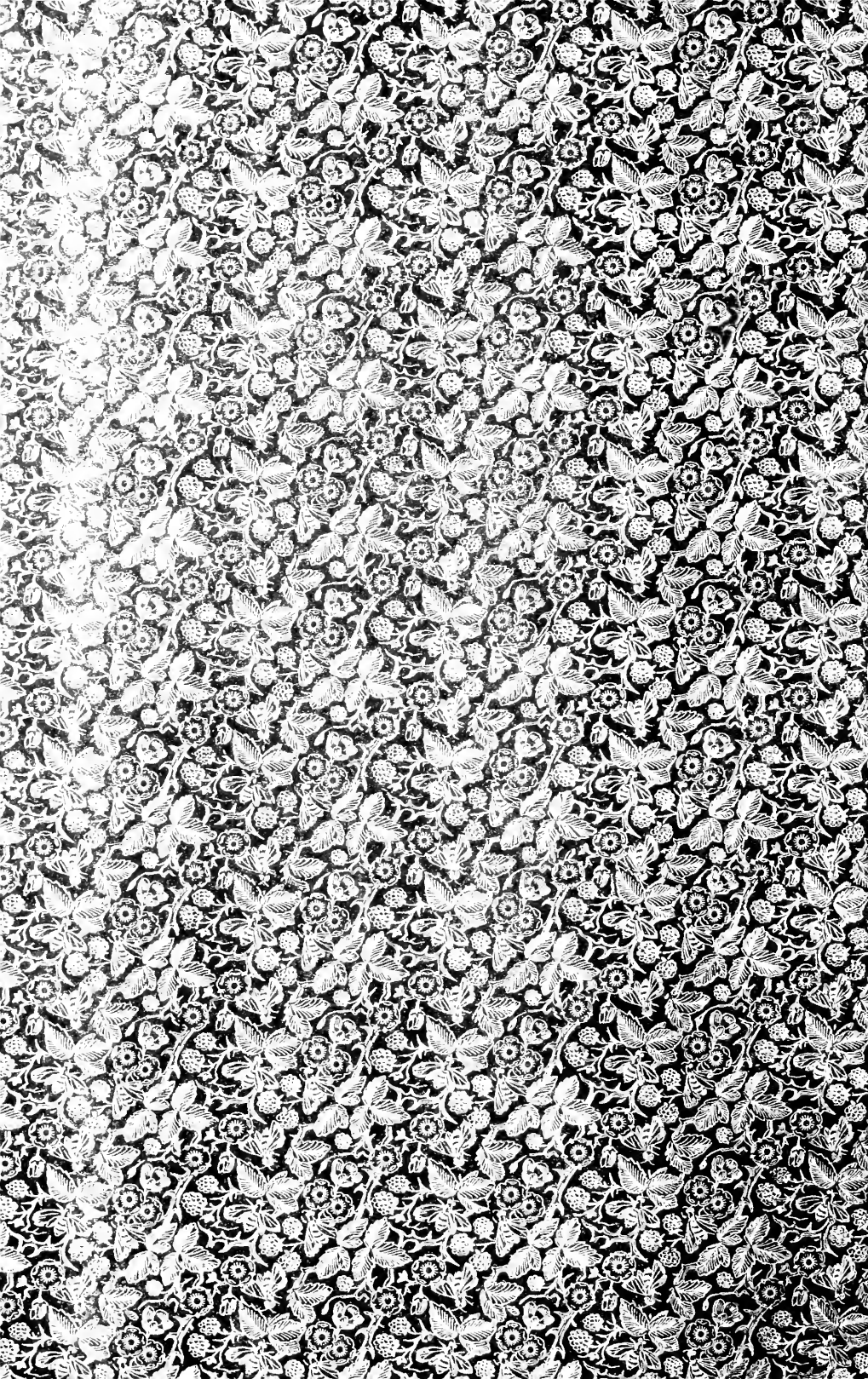
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