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NORTHERN PART OF THE FUH-KIEN PROVINCE.

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THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING

THE STORY OF C.E.Z.M.S. WORK
IN THE KIEN-NING PREFECTURE
OF THE FUH-KIEN PROVINCE, CHINA.

By Mary E. Darley,

*Missionary in China of the Church of England Zenana Missionary
Society, supported by the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Dublin
University Fuh-Kien Mission.*

WITH INTRODUCTION BY . .

JOHN RIGG, M.B., C.M.

(Late Church Missionary Society.)

WITH SEVENTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS AND TWO MAPS.

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“HE shall be as the Light of the Morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”

—1 *Sam. xxiii. 4.*

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PREFACE.




HIS little sketch of a few years' work in China has been written with only one object in view, *viz.*:—to call forth true and earnest prayer for God's work among the heathen, and to awaken a deeper and more active sympathy towards our Chinese brothers and sisters in Christ.

It may be that, through the fulfilling of this aim, some will care to receive later information regarding those whose lives have been but lightly sketched in these pages, and this can always be obtained by writing direct to "Kien-Ning, *via* Foo-Chow." The writer will gladly and quickly respond to any such expressions of interest.

May the compassion and love of Jesus Christ fill our hearts to overflowing with a love which, for His sake, will constrain the willing consecration and complete surrender of our lives to a service so grand, so wonderful, so full of joy! Thus may we bring gladness to our Saviour's heart by leading the souls for which He died out of utter darkness into "His marvellous light!"

MARY E. DARLEY.

INTRODUCTION.

HE Province of Fuh-Kien is well known to those whose habit is to pray for mission work, but to those who do not know its varied, eventful mission history its position may be indicated as that part of the mainland of China which is opposite to the Island of Formosa.

Foo-Chow—its capital—serving as our base and point of starting, we ascend the River Min for some 200 miles and arrive in the Kien-Ning Prefecture. The journey by river is slow, because of the rapids and rocks which prevent a steam launch from going more than one-third of the way. The remainder of the journey, after leaving the launch at Cui-Kau, being by poling or by the haulage of small boats against the rushing stream. Yen-Ping Fu, the capital city of the Prefecture of the same name, is the most important and largest of the places we pass or touch at, and I notice it now to say that the city and part of the district are joined to Kien-Ning for mission purposes, and form the combined field which is styled Yen-Kien on the native church roll.

Kien-Ning may be reached by another route from the above-named river-port of Cui-Kau. From Cui-Kau we strike into the mountains away from the Min River, and after one day's hard journeying of thirty miles arrive at Ku-Cheng City; two days more take us across the Ku-Cheng county, and, by ascending a mountain pass,

we cross the boundary between Ku-Cheng *Hsien* (County) and the Kien-Ning Prefecture, which is also the division between the Foo-Chow and Kien-Ning Prefectures. A few yards past the gateway which marks the boundary, there bursts on the traveller a glorious view of mountain ranges, one behind another—some seven or eight may be counted—stretching away into the far distance, some bare but most of them clothed with pines and bamboos. The mountains do not exceed 2,000 or 3,000 feet in height, and are razor-backed ranges with occasional peaks.

In the valleys between them, quite invisible in such a view, are rich-soiled rice fields and vegetable gardens watered by the rushing streams which commence at the head of each pass, and plunge down, ever growing, until they form tortuous little rivers winding past scores of small villages. A large part of the population of the nearer counties of the Kien-Ning Prefecture dwell in such villages and are busied in agriculture, and it has been in these agricultural villages, and in mountain hamlets mostly occupied in the industries of the digging up of bamboo shoots and the making of bamboo paper, that such work as that described in the present volume has been done by the workers of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society. The soil is rich and productive, the peasants diligent and skilful, so a small sufficiency is gained without much difficulty. Though seasons vary there is seldom famine, and the country people are richer and less frugal and hardy than those of the adjacent counties of Ku-Cheng and Ping-Nang. Being shut in by mountains, they are suspicious of strangers and jealous of innovations, and the variations of dialect in a substantially similar language are marked.

But such a survey, wide and illimitable as it seems, covers only a tiny portion of the wide-reaching Prefecture. We might travel six days to the North-west and still be on Kien-Ning ground; to East and West also it stretches over what would involve several toilsome days of travelling. Could we rise on the wings of a hawk to some 2,000 feet above the highest hills, and see with the bird's keenness of vision, we should discern the River Min as a tiny tortuous thread, now rushing in swift rapids, now lying in deep pools between rocky and steeply-sloping banks; and, on the extreme North and East, smaller rivers rising, which worm their way to join the main channel which has a general trend to the South-east.

And wherever two streams unite there is a walled *hsien** city with a small fleet of boats at one of its gates, while in hundreds of spots on one or other bank there are thriving and bustling market-towns. Following the smaller threads of all the streams, and ever ascending the gorges, we see dun-coloured hamlets, and, scattered in hot and closely-hidden hollows, are other hamlets where, thank God, there is, maybe, one man or one woman, or one child or even one family, to whom the name of 'Ya-Su' (Jesus) has a meaning.

I scarcely dare attempt an estimate of the population, but in the six walled cities, the scores of market-towns, the hundreds of villages and hamlets, there may be some three millions or more of people.

Much hard travelling is required to reach them; boats on which one may eat and sleep are very useful, but long ascents by steps are common in

* A *hsien* city is the capital of a county; a *fu* city, capital of a prefecture.

walking journeys, and, in many places after rain, the clayey soil gives slippery footing and mountain streams quickly become torrents and have to be passed. A breeze is uncommon, and for the most part the air is still and hardly a leaf stirs. The soil on the mountain slopes is often of a chocolate colour, and in this, especially, the tea plant is grown. In spring one sees the lower mountain slopes covered with women and children (of a class corresponding to the hop-pickers of Kent) busy picking tea leaves.

Travelling by sedan-chair is not easy, and very often there is no alternative to walking. If there are Christians there is a welcome, the cheer of which is known only to the toiling under-shepherd of souls ; but if, as often, there are no Christians, then a choice of inns has to be made. The best is not good, and only the absence of glass and the compulsorily open windows and doors make the atmosphere endurable. Then one is offered tea, delicious and refreshing, and often, a fan is lent and a pipe and tobacco proffered, for the people are hospitable. A crowd quickly gathers, all seem to have time to spare, and soon one is in conversation and has a golden opportunity of telling the truths of the Gospel in a conversational, easy way. The pigs and dogs are close by, and the animal world is in evidence down to things which creep and fly. Until one speaks their tongue the people crowd in silence, suspicious and curious, but when they hear their own words they wake up and become warm and friendly.

They are for the most part slight and lithe in form, not under-statured, swarthy and Italian looking, the children quite pretty and taking, very much alive as their restless, bright eyes

show. Closer acquaintance proves them to be wiry and active, subtle-minded, suspicious, rather free-handed with money, proud and, though courteous to guests, unwilling to allow settlers from the outside.

Now let us rapidly see how the Gospel has been brought to these people. The history is one of persevering effort met by repulse again and again, and each time the effort has been renewed under more hopeful conditions and with better organisation. Faith has been tried, and more than once serious counsel has been given to the workers to leave the district and go where there seemed to be less opposition, but the effort has been continuous and increasingly successful until now, in 1902, buildings for hospital and Church purposes are being used inside the City of Kien-Ning, and a number of healthy out-stations are being worked under foreign supervision. One fact dominates the history from the beginning to the present moment, *viz.*:—the scanty supply of foreign workers which has grievously narrowed the work and often made it difficult to hold what has been gained.

From 1863 to 1884 was the period of attempts being made, under Archdeacon Wolfe's direction, by native C.M.S. workers from the Ku-Cheng Church to occupy Kien-Ning Fu. These all failed, being ended by riots, but the village stations of Cue-Ciong and Ciong-Bau each remained with a handful of Christians as the result of these attempts. Twice property had been bought inside Kien-Ning Fu, but each time it was violently torn from the mission. It is interesting to notice that after an interval of some twenty years one of these houses has again become a centre of mission work, and that the

son of one of the heathen vendors, who died in consequence of ill-usage inflicted by the heathen in revenge for his selling property to the foreigners, became one of the brightest and most useful medical Catechists. In 1888, under the guidance of the Rev. W. Banister,* two foreigners, the Revs. H. C. Knox and H. S. Phillips, occupied the market-town of Nang-Wa, fifteen miles south of Kien-Ning City. They were shortly joined by the writer as a medical missionary, and for six years Nang-Wa was the centre of the work. In this centre a hospital was worked and many opium-patients treated, and from it, with the help of Ku-Cheng native workers, efforts were made to reach the surrounding villages, by itinerations, and especially Kien-Ning Fu, where a humble native dispensary was started in a suburb just outside the City wall, and Mr. Phillips began a long attempt to occupy the *hsien* City of Kien-Yang, thirty miles north of Kien-Ning Fu.

Mr. Knox, after acquiring the language, retired from ill-health, and the Rev. J. S. Collins volunteered to fill his place. Two C.E.Z. ladies occupied the *hsien* City of Ching-Ho, some three days' journey North-east of Kien-Ning. But in May, 1892, there were anti-foreign riots which stopped work in Kien-Ning, Kien-Yang, and Ching-Ho, in the two former cities only for periods of a few years and a few months respectively, but in Ching-Ho there has been no systematic resumption up to the present time.

While driven out of Kien-Ning, Nang-Wa remained the centre of work, and attention was given to the city of Yen-Ping in the adjoining

* Now Archdeacon Banister, of Hongkong.

Prefecture. The work in Yen-Ping has continued and now there is a small body of baptized Christians and enquirers who meet for worship in the hospital.

Since 1890 some devoted C.E.Z. workers, varying in number from three to ten, have rendered valuable service, especially in evangelizing at close quarters in the villages, as the following pages will show.

In 1894 a new hospital was built and opened at Seven Stars Bridge, close to Kien-Ning City, thus transferring the mission centre from Nang-Wa, and, up to 1899, work was peacefully and prosperously carried on. Kien-Yang progressed and baptisms took place, a suitable church and dispensary were built in Kien-Ning City, and work began at closer quarters with the most-difficult-to-reach Kien-Ning people; a successful effort was made to teach and help the lepers, and, towards the end of the period, a centre for women's work was gained in the City. As well, a suitable house for foreign ladies was built at Ciong-Bau, and the old premises were transformed into a Girls' Boarding School. A Boys' Boarding School was begun at Nang-Wa under the Rev. W. C. White, who had joined the mission as a representative of the Canadian Church. This did not augment the staff of men missionaries, as the Rev. J. S. Collins had been drowned in the Min River when itinerating in 1897. But in 1898 a further helper was added in the person of Dr. Pakenham, a medical missionary from Dublin. In 1899, the great riot occurred which is sufficiently described in the following pages. It led to a firmer and more assured footing in the City and district. The writer's own forced retirement in 1900 again reduced the foreign male staff to two workers, as Mr. White had been transferred to

another district, and a great flood the same year wrought havoc to the hospital buildings, necessitating plans for re-erection.

It was felt that now the time had come when, after many vicissitudes, the opposition of the Kien-Ning gentry had diminished to such an extent that the mission premises might be planted inside Kien-Ning Fu. This was the crown of the efforts which had begun in 1888. Nang-Wa remains an important centre from the number of villages in its neighbourhood, Ciong-Bau is a flourishing centre of educational and village work, the Boys' Boarding School is at Seven Stars Bridge, the former site of the (C.M.S.) hospital, the leper work progresses, Kien-Yang is in the charge of natives owing to the enforced transference of the Rev. H. S. Phillips to Kien-Ning City.

Inside the city Mr. Phillips is building a house for his occupation, and Dr. Pakenham has bought a site for the (C.M.S.) hospital and doctor's house.

Spiritual blessing has been given beyond the power of statistics to shew, but the following figures for 1901 give some interesting information.

Present number of baptized Christians	193
Number baptized in last completed year	34
Number of Catechumens.....	293
Number confirmed by Bishop Hoare in 1902 ...	90
Number of Girl Boarders	39
Number of Boy Boarders	20

JOHN RIGG, M.B., C.M.

September, 1902.


[The beginning of C.E.Z. medical work among women in Kien-Ning Prefecture was made by Miss F. Johnson, a qualified nurse, at Nang-Wa, while, as Dr. Rigg describes in the foregoing pages, the C.M.S. was also carrying on its medical work from that centre. But when, in 1894, the C.M.S. Hospital was moved to Five Li Rest House, or Seven Stars Bridge (though there is no bridge !), a mile outside Kien-Ning City, it was not convenient to have the women patients at Nang-Wa. Miss Johnson, therefore, transferred her work to temporary rooms in the C.M.S. Hospital compound, and shortly afterwards the present Seven Stars Bridge C.E.Z. Hospital was built on the highest part of the compound, where it remained undamaged by the flood of 1900.

Miss Johnson hopes to transfer the Women's Hospital this coming November (1902) from Seven Stars Bridge to the house in Kien-Ning City, bought for C.E.Z. work in 1899, with money given in memory of the Rev. J. Stratford Collins. To this house a second storey has been added, making it suitable for a hospital. The cost of the adaptation has been defrayed by the Dublin University Fuh-Kien Mission. The present Women's Hospital at Seven Stars Bridge will be used for school or station class purposes.]

CHAPTER I.

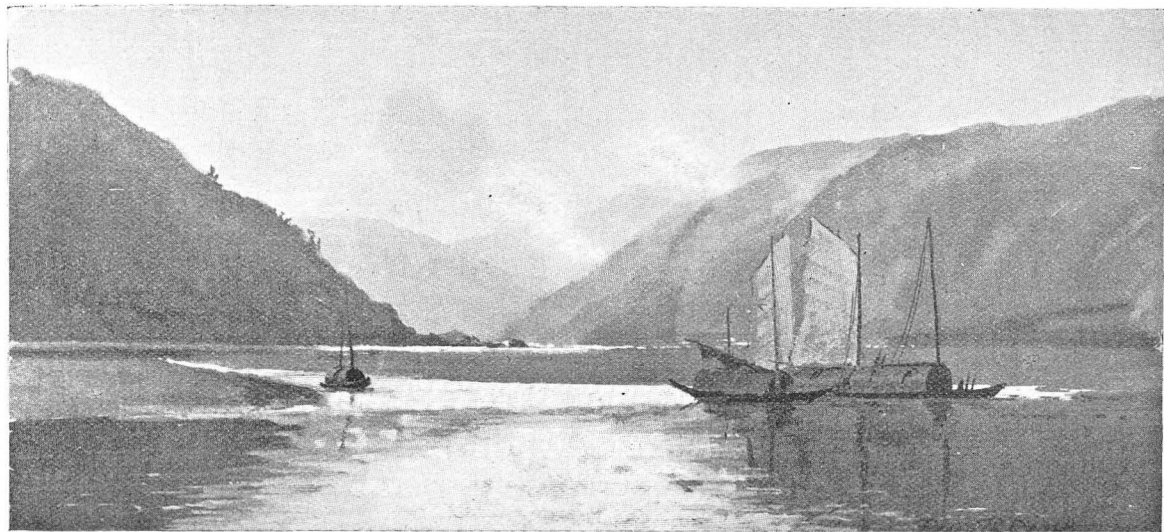
FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

“ And He shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.”—*I. Samuel xxiii. 4.*

E arrived at Foo-Chow in February, 1897, one cold rainy evening after dark. How strange everything seemed—the landing among a crowd of noisy China men, the getting into sedan-chairs, and the being carried, with the swinging motion peculiar to them, through narrow, sloppy, badly-paved streets, into more open ground, and then set down with a jerk in front of “The Olives,” our C.E.Z.M.S. head-quarters.

We were quite a large party of both new and returning missionaries ; but the scattering came before long, as we left for our different districts. A transformation scene took place when those of us who were bound for Ku-Cheng and Kien-Ning put on the native costume. Our feelings, however, were hardly so Chinese as our appearance, as we began our first experience of China travelling by crowding into a tiny boat for the night, in order to arrive towards morning at a steam launch, which brought us in one day to Cui-Kau, quite a long way up the Min River. There the Ku-Cheng sisters left us, while we Kien-Ning people changed again into smaller boats, as from that point onwards the rapids are many and dangerous.

We looked at the little boats, knowing we were to live in them for more than a week, and wondered,



ON THE RIVER MIN.

From a Sketch by Percy R. Craft, Esq.

had we not been there at all, would our belongings have been able to fit in, even packed up in baskets as they were? But—to prove the adaptability to circumstances of human beings—before a day had passed we had quite settled down to enjoy our long pic-nic. Day and night we spent sitting or lying on the floor of the boat, growing accustomed to the stamping of the sailors as they rowed or poled along, always standing, keeping time by chanting their monotonous song, and occasionally whistling or shouting to the wind spirit to come and help them. We also read, wrote, chatted, and constantly gasped with delight at the truly magnificent scenery through which we were slowly passing.

Sometimes the river, turning sharply, looked like a lake with the mountains sheer down to the water's edge.

Out of such calm, suddenly we would come upon the tumultuous rushing of a rapid, for which the boatmen had made preparation by lighting sticks of incense as a prayer for protection, and by fastening a long bamboo rope to the small mast. This was taken on shore by some of the men, each of whom had short ropes around their shoulders, joined to the end of the main one.

They, clinging to the rocky mountain sides, where there was often scarcely foothold, looked like so many ants dragging the caterpillar-like boat along.

It was something under a fortnight when Nang-Wa came into sight, and oh! how glad we were to reach our final destination, after having travelled continuously for two long months.

Our house in Nang-Wa was like an overgrown shanty, nice because of its queerness.

I so enjoyed settling into my own little room, with its roughly-boarded floor, white-washed walls, and shuttered window, commanding a most beautiful mountain and river view.

And now the language struggle began, which for the first month seemed hopeless. Just picture the poor beginner, sitting at one end of a table (painted a bright red) waiting for her teacher, who cannot speak a word of English. He walks slowly in, bows to her, gives the Christian greeting—"Honourable sister, peace"—carefully pulls his pig-tail to one side, sits down opposite her, and repeats a sound in eight distinct tones of voice. The pupil tries to follow, but not often successfully.

This becomes monotonous; through nervousness she laughs. He quietly waits until her composure is regained, and gravely begins again. However, she learns in time that "sêng" in an ordinary tone of voice means "city," in a lower one, "believe"; spoken with a grunt, "spirit"; and said sharply, "heart"; and so on with countless other words.

One day a small kitten seized my teacher's pig-tail, and hung on to it in great delight. The scene was amusing, as his efforts to free himself by standing up, and vigorously shaking the pig-tail, only made her cling more tightly.

But his solemnity, though proof against that episode, occasionally gave way when I treated him to impromptu dumb charades, endeavouring to find Chinese words for various actions.

But the language, although decidedly difficult, is not an impossible one. By degrees a footing is gained, and before many months have passed, we have climbed a little way up the mountain, and have hopes of some day reaching the summit.

Nang-Wa is a market town, built along one side of the river.

Idol temples, gaudy with paint, and fantastic in shape, are prominent. "Wholly given to idolatry," the people at this time shewed no desire to be freed from Satan's cruel bondage. And yet, as long ago as 1888, God sent His messengers to preach deliverance to them. They were flanked with opportunities, for the C.M.S. Hospital was at one end of their principal street, and, at the other, our C.E.Z.M.S. house; but they chose "darkness rather than light," and that, darkness such as could be felt!

Poor people! "consumed with terrors," superstitious and very wicked, they gave no heed to the pleading voice of the One who said "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

Soon after my arrival in 1897, the annual dragon festival was celebrated, when hundreds of men walked past our house, carrying trays of food to the river-side, as an offering to some being, whose anger had to be appeased.

"Tell the foreigners," they said, "not to sing their hymns and not to play their music for three days, lest the dragon be attracted back to us."

And this was after a period of ten years, in which the God of Love had been preached daily in that place.

"Come away, and leave them awhile," the Master said that Easter-tide, calling Home to Himself His brightest, keenest servant; * then, planning work for the others elsewhere, He

* The Rev. J. Stratford Collins, accidentally drowned in the River Min on April 20th, 1897.

whispered: "My word shall not return unto Me void," "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."

To-day the Nang-Wa harvest is ripening fast. In 1899, God sent Miss Fleming and Miss Coleston for the reaping of it, and now their hands are full, bringing in the sheaves.

We had only been there three months when, the heat of that spring becoming intense, some of us had to leave for Ku-Liang—a summer sanatorium near Foo-Chow.

This meant travelling again, but when the journey was over, and we found ourselves on the Ku-Liang Mountains, we felt well rewarded for our days of weary toil. The delicious coolness was most refreshing.

What a time of missionaries' meetings it was, as we met together once more and heard of each other's work and experiences! And how intensely we appreciated the privilege of joining again in an English Church service, for, though our Book of Common Prayer is translated into Chinese and used every Sunday in each mission station, it is a long time before we can really *worship* undisturbed and not feel hindered by our efforts to understand what is being said!

There are delightful walks, too, over these mountains, but that year much of their pleasure was spoiled by a tiger scare, which became very real when a huge beast which had been trapped and killed by the natives was carried past our house on the way to Foo-Chow, where he was sold to immense profit—even his blood, bones, and muscles being valuable to Chinese doctors, whose concoctions therefrom are dispensed with great profit to patients suffering from lack of courage and muscular strength.

No description of Ku-Liang life would be complete if the mists which constantly swept down upon us were not mentioned. At such times we actually lived in the clouds, and found the experience damping both to our spirits and possessions.

Then for a day or two the place would resemble a vast pawnshop, with garments, books, bedding, and furniture of all descriptions spread out to dry in the sun.

These very clouds and mists always seemed to intensify the beauty of the sunsets.

A group of rocks lay close to our house, on which we often met to watch the glory. The twilight is so short that the sky has not time to lose its blue before the sun sets himself in a blaze of wonderful colours, full of quick changes and flashes of summer lightning.

And, as we waited almost breathlessly, one thought was uppermost in all our minds:—

“It may be in the evening, when the work is done,
And you have time to sit in the twilight and watch the sinking
sun;
And the hour grows quiet and holy with thoughts of Me,
It may be through the gloaming I will come.”

Towards the middle of September, the great heat being over, Ku-Liang was again left to its native inhabitants.

Miss Fleming, Miss Gardner, and I, in returning to Kien-Ning, travelled overland by Ku-Cheng, and so left the river at Cui-Kau to follow the beautiful mountain path so often described and worn by saints before us.

When the thirty mile chair-ride was over, and we stood on the verandah of “The Olives,” looking across to the Hwa-Sang Hills, hazy in soft evening light, our thoughts dwelt on the lives

which had been laid down there on that August morning of 1895, and oh, how we longed that God's servants would come more quickly, to carry on the work in a place already so richly blessed!

Our stay at Ku-Cheng made a delightful break in our journey, and the hearty loving welcome given us by the Ku-Cheng sisters is lovely to look back upon.

During the following three days' journey I had my first experience of Chinese inns, and certainly their lack of cleanliness has never been exaggerated.

It is considered unlucky to wash the floors of any dwelling-place, while great care is taken not to disturb air and water spirits. Now, the effects of these superstitions in a private house are unfortunate; but in an inn, where the traffic of people, pigs, dogs, and fowls is unceasing, the result may be left to the imagination.

Our arrival each evening may be described in two scenes:—

I. We reach a wide door, opening into a dark and comfortless hall. It is supper-time, and groups of visitors sit round small tables, not speaking, but making a large amount of noise in the drinking of soup and clicking of chopsticks.

Suddenly dogs bark, there is shouting outside, followed by keen excitement inside, as three tired "foreign women" appear, asking for a night's lodging. Then, through crowds of people and several varieties of animal life, they slowly make their way to what is probably the only available bedroom.

II. The three foreigners stand surveying the accommodation by the light of their lantern. The floor is of well-worn clay, the walls too

dirty to touch, and the low rafters thick with cobwebs and grime. The furniture consists of two or three plank-beds, covered with untidy straw mattresses and bamboo mats. These they carefully remove, dusting the boards underneath before spreading out the bedding they have unpacked from their loads. This accomplished, they return to the outer hall, and while eating supper answer questions relative to why they have come to China.

Then, pleading weariness, they retire to rest, fully conscious that numerous eyes are watching their movements through every possible chink !

It is pure delight to walk through the glorious scenery in the early mornings. The ground is strewn with myriads of dew-drop diamonds, while, in places, stretched right across the path, are glistening curtains spun by spiders, little drops full of reflected glory shining on every mesh of the gossamer net. Everything looks so beautifully fresh with the sun rising over the mountains, differing strangely from the surroundings in which the night has been spent, and making a comparison which may well fill our hearts with hope as we think of a dawn to follow the night of heathen darkness—when light shall break forth as the morning. "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the heathen . . . ; saith the Lord of Hosts."

The journey was not an easy one, for we often had literally to cross right over the mountains, climbing for hours straight up stone steps, laid down long years ago by some hard-working generation of Chinese.

But, before beginning a weary descent, we always felt our toil was well rewarded by the

magnificence of the view which greeted us, and by the quantities of flowers which grow in these high places, where the air is balmy and soft like that of a home June day.

Sheets of small mauve and white Michaelmas daisies, red and white lilies, a great luxuriance of ferns, and the never-failing bamboo trees, swaying with every breath of air, are in themselves sufficient to banish weariness.

In passing through villages the coolies would often put our chairs down, and go for a while either to eat opium or drink tea, leaving us to the mercy of a curious crowd. Once, when my pair of English shoes were the object of many remarks, in fun I took one off, and passed it round for closer inspection.

The process took so long that I doubted its return; however, in due time an old man gravely restored my property, which I as gravely accepted.

Then the coolies would quietly saunter back, generally drinking from the spout of a coarse earthenware teapot, politely offering some to us as they removed it from their mouths.

The evening of the second day brought us into our Kien-Ning Prefecture and dialect, and, no longer feeling strangers in a strange land, we responded to salutations, giving the customary road-side greetings: "Have you eaten your rice-breakfast—dinner—or supper—yet?"—according to the time of day.

Then, drawing nearer to our destination, we more than once met a Christian brother who in passing gave us the beautiful salutation: "Peace, sisters, peace!"

At Ciong-Bau we found Miss Johnson waiting to welcome us. She almost immediately went on with Miss Gardner to Nang-Wa, where they

moved from our former house, and then made final preparations for the opening of a Hospital for women at "Seven Stars Bridge," close to Kien-Ning City, while I remained with Miss Fleming at Ciong-Bau.

CHAPTER II.

SOME VILLAGE CHRISTIANS.

“Once darkness, but . . . now light in the Lord.”

—*Ephesians, v. 8 (R.V.)*



WAS now brought into touch with the lives of Chinese Christians, for there are several families of “worshipping-God people” in the little village of Ciong-Bau.

Foremost amongst them in zeal and earnestness was a woman named Mrs. Eng-Nu. She was very angry when her husband, who had been one of the earliest Kien-Ning Christians, ceased from worshipping idols, but she was angrier still when she learnt that on one day in every seven he would do no work.

As her repeated scoldings had no effect, she tried stronger measures, and Sunday after Sunday he came home from service to find no dinner cooked for him. “If he would not work, neither should he eat,” she said.

But his patience at this treatment surprised her, and she was forced to think the “New Doctrine” must be the cause of such a very remarkable change in his conduct. After some months of careful watching, in which her attitude towards him had entirely changed, she also gave her heart to the Saviour, and ever since her one object in life has been to tell others of His Love.

Each morning she came to a small dispensary we had opened, and preached to the patients. She was always greatly distressed if, from lack of medical knowledge, I sent any away, and often

implored me : " Do not tell them to go, give them something ; we will together pray to Jesus ; then, no matter what medicine you give, He can make them well."

Dear little Mrs. Eng-Nu ! Gentle, loving, and clinging, with a heart which invariably governs her head, generous almost beyond her means, whole-hearted, true-hearted, faithful and loyal—she is one of those whom we count it a privilege to know.

The medical work in Ciong-Bau increased side by side with my reputation as a " healing-sickness sister," though the latter unfortunately had not much to rest upon. " She knows all about us before we say one word," was the usual remark, arising from the fact that I wore glasses—a sign of learning, and that my words were, of necessity, few !

But God was blessing the simple remedies I gave, and using them as a means by which to open houses and villages formerly closed by the gates of superstition.

A-Bau, the village next to Ciong-Bau, is full of idolatry, and at that time the only Christian among its two thousand inhabitants was an old blind woman. The story went that, in days of heathen misery, she had cried until the very sight had left her eyes.

We shall not quickly forget the day on which she—the first-fruits of A-Bau—was received into the visible Church of Christ. It was a glad entrance, and the joy from within was to be seen on the sightless face.

Having no one to support her, the Ciong-Bau Christians kept her supplied with rice, and Sunday after Sunday sent children to lead her to Church. While they constantly prayed that she, shining

for Jesus in the darkness of A-Bau, might be used to draw other souls into His brightness.

The answer to these prayers came before long. One morning, Mrs. Eng-Nu, in great delight, presented us with a small earthenware pot covered over with oiled paper. "That," she said, "has been given me by a girl in A-Bau, who thinks her soul is in it. The blind Church-mother has been telling her of God, and now she wants to worship Him."

And then we heard how they two, "putting forth great courage," had walked that morning to an idol-temple some distance away, and had demanded the pot from the Buddhist priests, into whose charge it had been given years before.

We opened it, only to see a bit of old paper, a few cash and some dusty chips of wood—nothing else, and yet the poor girl feared to worship the true God, while she believed it contained her soul.

She was relieved to hear we had broken the jar and burnt its contents on a rock by the river-side. "But to think," she exclaimed, "how long I wasted money paying those priests for their prayers!"

Wasted, indeed! Until God sent His blind servant to speak of a redemption obtained not "with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."

Almost immediately her light, dim and flickering as it was, shone upon the life of an old man living in the same house, breaking down his prejudice against the "foreign women." In passing by one evening we found him sitting on the door-step waiting to speak to us.

Oh how he pleaded with us to pity him and heal his leg, which had been sore for over two years. He looked so miserable that our hearts

were touched and we begged him to go to the men's hospital close to Kien-Ning City, but this he was unable to promise.

Then we left him, knowing that our powers of healing were not equal to his need. But we felt God had challenged us not to limit His power, and we returned next morning to begin a little piece of fresh service, grateful for the love which had kept us from missing it.

We slowly removed a thick covering composed of leaves and ashes, which had been untouched for months. A dreadful sight was disclosed, for, from the knee to the ankle, the bone was bare in places. We felt utterly helpless.

Oh how the Ciong-Bau Christians prayed. They almost thought their God's honour was at stake, with the heathen on all sides questioning—"Can the foreigners' God really do this?"

It was weeks before the answer came, and then each day saw some improvement. New flesh, like that of a little child, growing in the most diseased parts.

The old man did not at first realize to Whom the healing power belonged. He often said, "Great great thanks to the sister, great great thanks to the sister's God," but we knew the time was coming when he would reverse that order.

After nearly three months he walked one Sunday into Ciong-Bau for service, and joined with us all in praising God for his recovery.

But, a few weeks later, his place in Church was empty and our hearts sank. Could it be he had only come for bodily healing, after all?

We went to find out that evening, and found him hard at work making a bamboo mat.

"This is Worship Day," we said, "and you are working."

“Worship Day!” he exclaimed. “Sisters, I forgot, I forgot.”

Then standing up, the tall, gaunt, white-haired old man scolded himself in real distress, as he paced up and down the hall. Calming down a little, he brought forward a high stool, knelt before it, and called out loudly several times—“Great God, Jesus, Saviour, forgive my sin. Thy Worship Day I quite forgot. Help me to remember always.”

It is not difficult for these new Christians to pass over a Sunday, for the heathen recognize no division of weeks, the year only being marked by twelve months or “moons.”

We once asked a young girl, who was the only Christian in a distant village, how she remembered, and her answer was, “God’s Holy Spirit helps me to know.”

It was indeed the Holy Spirit Who brought another, an older woman, to Ciong-Bau one Saturday evening, having walked quite thirteen miles on small bound feet in order to spend the following “Worship Day” with other Christians.

She found her way to Mrs. Eng-Nu’s house, and said how three years before two sisters (Miss Johnson and Miss I. Newcombe), when spending a few days in her mountain village, had taught her many things about the true God.

But of it all she only remembered to keep one day in every seven holy.

“And so,” she went on, “when that morning came, I did no work—did not even sweep my hall; I worshipped the great God.”

Think of it! No almanack, no fellow-Christian within reach, no help from any human being, and yet after three whole years she was able to arrive

on a Saturday evening, simply to join in the "big worship" of the next day!

At that time the Catechist in Ciong-Bau was a fine old man, with a strong face full of expression which revealed a story.

As a young man he had been headstrong and wild, given to gambling and opium-eating, but he had a Christian mother who never ceased to pray for him.

One morning, while passing through a village, he heard singing, and at once recognized it as "eating-foreign-doctrine people doing worship."

Something prompted him to go in and listen quietly. He became interested, more and more so as the service went on, but when he heard the prayer for "All sorts and conditions of men," his astonishment knew no bounds.

"Why," he thought, "a religion which teaches men to pray for others in such a way must be good."

That day saw the turning point of a life God wanted for service. The man put himself in the way of instruction and gave up eating opium. When I knew him, he had been a Catechist for years, first in his own district of Ku-Cheng, and then in Kien-Ning, where there was the difficulty of acquiring a new dialect to contend with. He never perfectly learned their tones, but the people in Ciong-Bau understood and loved him.

Night after night they came to evening prayers, when he often preached for as long as an hour and a half. To us, after the day's work, it was rather a weariness of the flesh, but to them, enjoyment.

His methods of keeping order in Church were amusing.

It was no uncommon thing to see him quietly walk down the hall, unwind a man's pig-tail, and pull it straight down his back with a chuck. It had been coiled round the offender's head for convenience when engaged in hard work, but the signs of ordinary business, he thought, should not come into "God's Worship Hall."

In preaching, his examples were largely drawn from the habits of the congregation, and, as a rule, to their disadvantage.

But this they did not object to in the slightest, for after these occasions some such remark as the following might often be heard, "Truly our Sing-Saing said good words to-day. Lai-Hi-Mi's mother spoils him just as Eli spoiled his sons. She will also have to eat sorrow."

Illustrations used by the natives can be both forcible and original.

For instance, one of our preachers compared a person trying to work out his own salvation by deeds of merit, to a man who had fallen from a boat into the deep, rushing waters of a mighty river, making desperate efforts to save himself from drowning by clinging on to his own pig-tail!

A very pathetic scene occurred about this time. The Catechist was a hot-tempered man, and had never claimed complete deliverance from outbursts of passion.

A new Church and a house for us were being built in Ciong-Bau. Only those who have had experience know how trying Chinese workmen can be. They do excellently when carefully watched, but like to take their time and deceive whenever they possibly can.

Deng discovered one day some very daring deception, and immediately gave way to a violent outburst of passion, which he vented upon his

wife, shouting and snatching a pail from her hand only to throw it across the hall, and this in the presence of several heathen on-lookers.

Quickly recovering himself, he went into a room alone. Later on he appeared, and sent for the Christians to come for evening prayers.

When they were assembled he stood before them and, sobbing like a child, confessed his sin, begging them to ask that he might be forgiven for having so dishonoured God.

Many of them prayed, and all were in tears. Before separating one and another tried to bring him comfort by reminding him of St. Peter's fall and restoration. "Do not fear, Sing-Saing, Peter sinned, Peter very sad, afterwards Peter very, very great Apostle." The preacher and his people were in close touch that evening.

Only a few months later he fell more grievously, after which, to the Christians' sorrow, he was removed from Ciong-Bau. But though Satan gained a victory and our disappointment was keen, even then we could hear God saying of him, "Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him."

This Catechist is now working in another part of the district.

The amount of kindness shown to us by these village Christians was very touching. Their very real love constantly found its expression in gifts of food.

Often a child would come in, carrying a little covered bowl, and saying, "Sisters, we killed a fowl to-day, my mother sends you one of its legs, that you may share our feast." Or perhaps it might be a few hot dough-cakes, containing choice morsels of fat pork, some large eggs, lumps of sugar-candy, pieces of sugar-cane, or vegetables from "our own garden."

It was their delight to give.

The exalted opinion in which we were held was often overwhelming.

More than once we have overheard one or other of the women, when standing in front of our bookshelves, say to an admiring visitor, "Look at the sisters' holy books, all teach the things of God."

And in the evenings of that first year, as a rest and refreshment after the day's doctoring and Chinese reading, I constantly sang parts of the Oratorios, to the accompaniment of my dear baby harmonium.

At such times the people would quietly wait downstairs, and remark that "Diàn-sister spent all her spare minutes in worshipping God with the wind instrument."

But a more amusing example occurred one day, when sowing seeds in our little garden and kneeling on the ground for the purpose, a passing Christian was heard to say, "See! our sisters pray over each seed they sow."

There was now great excitement in the village, for a large class of women were learning to read the New Testament printed in Romanized lettering. Miss Bryer had lately translated it from the difficult Mandarin character into so simple a form, that women, to whom the Bible had formerly been a sealed book, were enabled to master its contents intelligently in about three months.

To the missionary, this was a labour of love—to the Kien-Ning women, a gift of untold riches. They had been accustomed from childhood to hear themselves spoken of as stupid and without understanding, with neither intellect nor souls—and now, to find that they really possessed the ability to learn surprised them quite as much as it did their "lords of creation."

"If I learn to read, perhaps my son's father* may care for me," was a young girl's plea, when asking Miss Fleming to teach her, a remark which expressed the longing of many an un-loved wife in China.

It was beautiful to see how precious God's Word became to them.

Mrs. Eng-Nu, who was the first to learn, spent all her spare time in reading, and often came to us with a beaming face to speak of some special verse she had come across, while her sister-in-law, whose husband kept a cake-shop, was constantly seen with her Testament open on the counter, reading aloud to a group of wondering customers.

No greater benefit could have been conferred upon these Christian women. Instead of being dependent upon our faltering words, or upon other outside teaching, they were now armed for their wrestling with seen and unseen foes, with "the Sword of the Spirit."

This thought has been such a comfort to us in times of special danger, when we have had to leave these "little ones" to stand, humanly speaking, alone in the thickest of the fight.

For their Sword is the Word of God, and is "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds." By which word they, as well as we, are "quickened" or made alive (Psa. cxix., 50), "grow in grace" (1 Pet. ii., 2), and become "strong" (1 Jno. ii., 14).

"Lord, Thy Word abideth,
And our footsteps guideth,
Who its truth believeth,
Light and joy receiveth.

"Who can tell the pleasure,
Who recount the treasure,
By Thy Word imparted
To the simple hearted?"

* It is improper for a woman to speak of her husband. Hence the use of this phrase.

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF GOLDEN SISTER.

“At evening time it shall be light.”—*Zechariah xiv. 7.*

THERE is a legend told in Kien-Ning connected with one of the floods which have occasionally arisen on the Min River. These have brought sudden desolation with the rush of water, which has swept mercilessly through the cities and villages within its reach and has caused the inhabitants awful loss and suffering in a wonderfully short space of time.

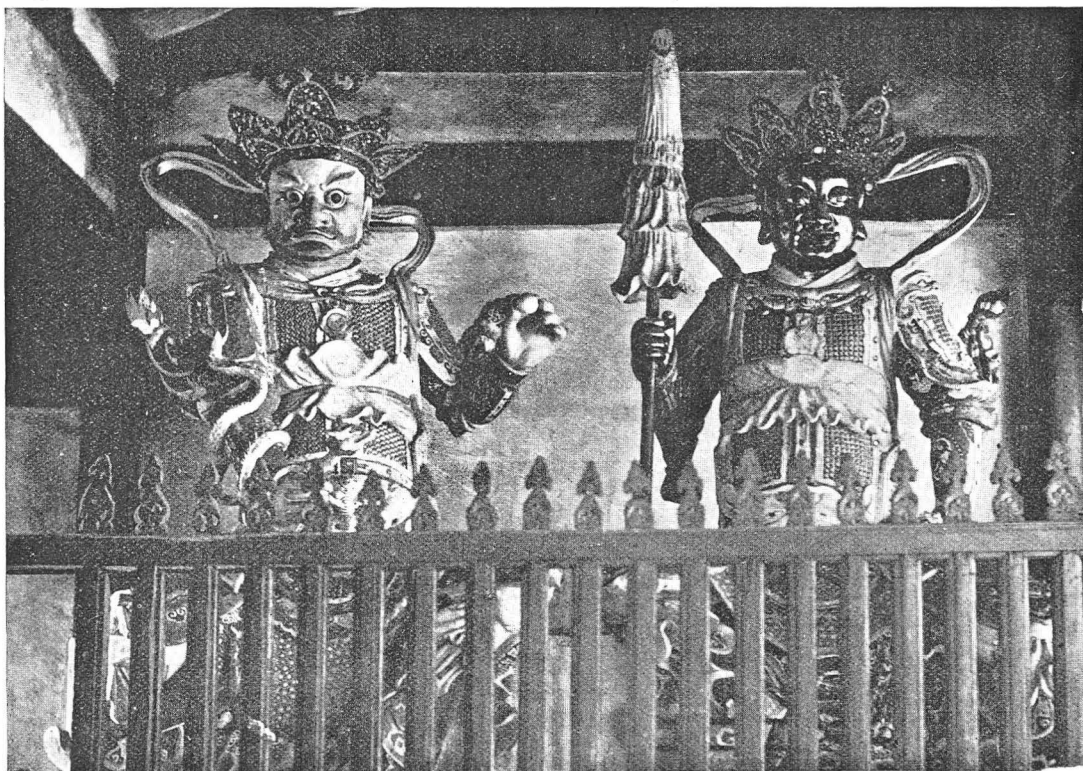
Timely warning of this particular flood was given to an old woman, whose house stood in a low-lying part of the city.

“Come to higher ground,” urged her friends, “we will protect you.”

“No,” she answered, “should the waters trouble me here, there is a place of perfect safety awaiting me.” And they wonderingly left her.

She looked out of the door-way. Yes, the flood was surely rising, so, collecting a few special treasures, she calmly set out and walked to a large idol-temple some little distance from the city walls. She arrived footsore and weary, but with a mind at rest.

By-and-bye it grew dark. She could hardly see the many idols around the vast hall, with their hideous grotesque expressions, staring fixedly in front of them, while she sat dreamily on at the feet of one she had worshipped for years.



BUDDHIST IDOLS.

But hark ! a plashing sound ! Awakened now, she saw the waters trickling, gushing, streaming in, with ever increasing force.

Raising herself, she climbed upon the idol's knees. No water would dare to touch her there.

She heard it lapping at the feet. Higher and higher still it rose. The knees were reached.

She cried aloud in wondering terror, and climbed up into the very arms of the god, clinging around its hard cold neck. But the force of waters was great, the idol tottered once, twice, and then fell with the living burden it was powerless to save.

Only a legend, but daily exemplified in every heathen country under the sun. "Then shall the cities . . . go and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense : but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble." (Jer. xi., 12.)

And so countless numbers perish in darkness, not having heard of the One "mighty to save," Who pleads with us again and again to be His messengers and to say to them from Him :— "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." "Come unto Me all ye heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

The following simple story of a girl I loved comes back to me with thankfulness, as my mind dwells on the sadness of this legend, for her nineteen years of troubled darkness ended in calm and brightness.

She too, clung to the idols, but when she knew them to be but dust, and herself helpless and alone, then she cried to the Lord, and He received her, and she fell asleep at last in His arms.

Geng-Mue's (Golden Sister) life had always been sad ; sold away as a tiny child to a woman

wanting a daughter-in-law, she was brought up side by side with her boy-husband, who treated the little wife as a mere chattel upon which to vent his varying moods.

It was he who brought her to Ciong-Bau one evening, and, in an extremely cool manner, said we might "keep her until her sickness was well. She was no use, she made trouble in the house, and could not even cook the rice. She was always crying with the pain of her arm, and keeping him awake at night. He could bear it no longer." Then, roughly pushing her towards us, he ran off before we had time even to expostulate.

She stood as he left her, moaning with pain, and fearing to look up, just repeating over and over again, "*Ai-Ia!* For me have pity, for me have pity."

"Pity!" Our hearts were touched, as we listened to the utter weariness in every tone of her voice, but they grew sore, as bit by bit we heard the story of her eighteen years, so heavily weighted with sorrow.

The words "Not wanted" might have been written across them.

She told us that some time before a "foreign sister" had stayed a day or two in their house. "She spoke words very good to hear, and my mother-in-law began to worship your God, but soon afterwards she returned to the idols. She went to bed one night seeing, and the following morning awakened almost blind. The other worshipping-God people in the village said this strange complaint in her eyes came as a judgment upon her. We were afraid."

They were a superstitious family, and when Geng-Mue, in trying to separate two of them who were quarrelling, was knocked down and

hurt her arm against the corner of a table, they looked upon themselves as victims of some great being's wrath.

For about eighteen months this arm was allowed to grow worse and worse. Little or nothing was done for it, and, the girl's health becoming altogether broken, she was daily taunted about her uselessness.

Her husband, believing she was dying, only allowed her the scantiest and coarsest of food, hoping by this means to hasten an event to which he looked forward with unmixed feelings of relief.

Then, some one thought of sending her to the "healing-sickness sister" in Ciong-Bau, and the suggestion was quickly acted upon, as the easiest way out of a difficulty.

The following month—February, 1898—Miss Johnson and Miss Gardner hoped formally to open the women's Hospital and they were already receiving patients.

We told Geng-Mue this, but she implored us to keep her in Ciong-Bau, and not until I absolutely refused to touch her arm would she consent to go. "I at first feared you," she said, "I now fear these other sisters."

However, when we had comforted her mind, she willingly started upon the thirteen mile chair-ride.

A few weeks later Miss Fleming and I paid our first visit to the Hospital.

It is most beautifully situated, over-looking a bend of the Min River—a long low building on the top of a hill, in a compound containing the men's hospital (C.M.S.), a house for the doctors and one for the native students.

When climbing the hill, we heard shouts of "Peace, sisters, Peace," and looking up saw

Geng-Mue leaning over the verandah, her face beaming with delight. She had much to tell us, "Everyone was so good and kind, and loved her."

After each rapturous outburst she would always say, "And if my arm gets well, I will worship the true God." She was unwilling to undergo an operation which Dr. Rigg considered necessary in order to remove some diseased bone, but we hoped that as she regained strength her consent to this would not be difficult to obtain.

Geng-Mue and I became fast friends. She was learning much, and was never tired of quietly singing to herself the chorus of what is perhaps the favourite hymn among the Chinese Christians :—

"Jesus loves me, this I know."

The day before that on which I had arranged to return to Ciong-Bau, she, with two other girls, told me I need not prepare to go, "For," they said, "you are not leaving us to-morrow."

Of course I thought they were joking, and laughingly told them to be up early to see me off, but I awoke next morning to hear the rain coming down in torrents, and at once gave up all thought of starting, for the narrow paths would be all but impassable. Our plans in China need to be flexible.

Geng-Mue greeted my appearance with little shrieks of delight. "Look, sister," she said, "this is our doing; we did not want you to go, so we prayed that the rain might come. Nearly the whole night we prayed to God for this."

She was so confident it had come in answer to their prayers that, hardly knowing what to say, I could only tell them it was not kind to hinder anyone's plans, and now to pray for weather fine



THE WOMEN'S HOSPITAL, KIEN-NING.

enough to enable me to travel the following day, and this they did most heartily.

During this visit Dr. Rigg gave me my first language examination. And, after the passing of this milestone, which marked a certain amount of progress on an up-hill journey, I gladly set out afresh to work on for the second and last.

The accounts of Geng-Mue, which from time to time came to us in Ciong-Bau, were never satisfactory. She still held out against the operation, and kept to her former statement, "If my arm gets well, I will worship the true God."

One night she had a dream, which brought all this indecision to an end.

Many of our Christians have been first turned to God by means of a dream, and it is strange how constantly it takes the form of a man, dressed in long white shining clothes, with a face good to look upon, who says, "Do not worship idols, worship the true God and great peace will come to you."

But Geng-Mue's dream was different. She saw no one, but heard voices from behind her, saying, "Go back to your home, the idols can cure you, the sisters' God cannot."

When a day or two later her husband arrived at the hospital to tell of wonderful cures being effected by a most powerful idol in a neighbouring village, Geng-Mue listened' eagerly and at once thought of her dream. It was useless trying to keep her. Almost immediately she left, to cling tightly, desperately, to a hope which crumbled to dust beneath the pressure of her grasp.

We lost sight of her then for a few months. But Nang-Tia, the village where she lived, was only about three miles from Ciong-Bau, and she was

constantly in our thoughts, so one day, without waiting for the customary invitation, I walked over to her house.

The mother-in-law peered at me with almost sightless eyes, as I stood in the doorway.

“ May I see Geng-Mue ? ” I asked her.

Before she had time to answer a voice from within called out in great excitement, “ It is my Diàn-sister, it is my Diàn-sister ; bring her in.”

I was led to a small, dark, side room, and there, on a dirty board-bed, lay Geng-Mue.

She tried to raise herself, but failed, from weakness ; then, grasping my hand, she burst into tears and said, “ Sister, I was wrong, I was wrong, but Jesus has forgiven my sin.”

“ Geng-Mue has changed exceedingly,” said the old woman. “ The cures we tried gave her great pain. Now she only lies there and cannot even lift her hand, but, instead of crying as she used to do, now she sings your hymns night and day.”

I looked at the girl lying there in great bodily discomfort.

“ Geng-Mue,” I asked, “ is your heart all peace ? ”

“ Peace, sister,” she answered, “ it has great great peace. Jesus is with me all day long. He is calling me to Heaven, I am nearly there.”

I was often with her after that, and it was beautiful to see her happily and fearlessly walking through “ the valley of the shadow of death.”

“ Diàn-sister,” she asked one evening, “ have you friends in Heaven ? ”

“ Yes,” I answered.

“ I am very glad,” she exclaimed, “ because when I have greeted Jesus, I will say ‘ Diàn-sister’s people, where are they ? ’ He will shew

me, and I will tell them all about you, how you are, what you do, and I will give them your peace-greeting."

She lay still for a moment, and the door seemed open into Heaven.

"Our Father's house on high,
Home of my soul, how near,
At times, to Faith's foreseeing eye,
Thy golden gates appear!"

That was my last visit. I should like to have been with her at the end, for her entrance into rest was triumphant. The old woman told me of it afterwards. She spoke gently, for her heart had been touched.

Shortly before God sent for her, she had called the whole family together, and pleaded with them most earnestly to give up the useless idols, and worship the true God. She told her husband, who to the end had tried to starve her, that all his unkindness was forgiven; and left him her one possession—a white handkerchief which had been mine—saying to him, "Cut it up and put it as tops to your socks. My feet have walked on the road to Heaven; let this make yours follow me." She besought them not to perform heathen ceremonies for her body, but to give her "a worshipping-God-person's funeral," and only to call "Diàn-sister" to follow the coffin. Then she became partly unconscious, and occasionally murmured the words of her favourite hymn.

"Yes, Jesus loves me, Jesus loves me."

And when the Angel of Death came, He carried away a soul waiting, longing to be set free, and placed it "safe in the Arms of Jesus."

"Say not she sank to rest,
As a wounded bird on the sod!—
As a waking child to its mother's breast,
She sprang to life and to God."

CHAPTER IV.

THE "TEN COMMANDMENTS INN" WOMAN.

"Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."—*Ephesians v. 14.*

IN the Spring of 1898, Miss Fleming went home on furlough, while Miss B. Newcombe carried on her work.

The many villages still shrouded in darkness, within easy walking distance from Ciong-Bau, were much upon our hearts, so we decided to turn all our energies upon them now.

It was difficult and disheartening work ; for the Ciong-Bau Church and Christians had ceased to excite much interest, the Names of God and the Lord Jesus were not unknown, and the superstition in connection with us had by no means lessened.

In a village quite close to us, our appearance was always the signal for every mother to call her boys in from the street, and cover the face of the baby in her arms lest we should over-look it in some mysterious way.

The elder lads, not heeding the home calls, but quite willing to be out of the dread foreigners' reach, quickly climbing upon the nearest walls or roofs, and not discriminating between the "sent ones" and the Sender, would shout out, "Jesus has come, Jesus has come."

We never grew accustomed to that cry. It always brought tears to our eyes, with the longing that He Who was with us might be received by even one among them. But He

Whose yearning love was so infinitely deeper than ours, had to pass by again and again with the same sad words of long ago, "I am come in My Father's Name, and ye will not receive Me," "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

Oh how often we have ached *to force* such as these to believe, *to make them* take in our wonderful message!

But this we are powerless to do. It is only when the Spirit of God has moved upon the darkness of their hearts, awakening and making them conscious of deep unsatisfied desires, that they recognize in the Jesus we preach the One who can meet their every need. And then, as we watch the quick, glad acceptance of the Old, Old Story, it almost seems as if they had just been waiting and waiting until we came to put the poor groping hands into touch with the strong, tender, saving clasp of their Saviour and ours.

But at this time we were not coming across many such waiting ones. Perhaps in the withholding of present results God was teaching us deeper lessons in prayer, trust, and praise.

Our hearts were deeply stirred by an incident which came to our knowledge just then.

We were visiting and, overhearing a low continuous wailing from an inner room, we asked our hostess,

"Who is in trouble?"

"A woman," she answered, "who is sad for her little boy." The child's eyes were sore, so his father carried him to the healing-sickness sister in Ciong-Bau, but she could not cure them. The father was very angry and, not caring to own a blind son, brought him to the river side and threw him in to drown.

We found our way to the poor woman. She did not turn from us, but spoke so sadly of how she missed the child, "He was growing clever, each day more clever, he was not three years old and able to manage his own chop-sticks; now I am lonely, always lonely."

I remembered the morning on which the little boy had been brought to me and, thinking a cataract was forming upon his eyes, I urged the father to bring him at once to Dr. Rigg in the Kien-Ning hospital. But, as that would have meant the trouble and fatigue of a long walk, the cruel Christless man chose to drown his own little son instead.

Such horrors make living in a heathen country hard, but they also shew how sorely we are needed to go and speak of the Father God, Whose Name is Love.

Miss Newcombe was having encouragement in a weekly Bible Class she held with the Christian women at Nang-Tia—Geng-Mue's village. Both she and they enjoyed it thoroughly.

An amusing scene occurred there one day when the Catechist's young wife with whom she was having dinner, placed a bowl of what might have been small pieces of chicken on the table. Her guest, not recognizing the taste as that of any fowl, asked what it was, and heard, to her dismay, that she was eating "A rat, very big, very good, caught this morning in our bed-room!"

As the hot weather set in that year a great joy came to us, and I saw my first burning of idols.

From the first opening of our dispensary, the woman from the Ciong-Bau Inn had been coming for medicine for her son, who was far gone in consumption. She was a hard sad-faced woman, and often stormed at me for not making him well.

"You heal people from far and near," she would say, "but you will not heal my son—my one, only son."

My "I cannot" was to her a "will not."

Both mother and son knew of the Lord Jesus, and the former's face would sometimes relax as we spoke of His Love, but the son gave no sign of even hearing our words.

The cake-shop man was often to be seen towards the close of the day, sitting by his side, entreating him not to turn from the Saviour, so patiently standing and knocking at the door of a heart which the sick man alone could unlock.

But even to such gentle pleading he apparently listened unmoved. One morning his mother arrived at our house, her face full of purpose, and brighter than we had ever seen it before. "My son has gone away," she said, "but last night he commanded me to give him a worshipping-God-man's funeral, and to have no idol ceremonies at his grave. He believed in his inside heart, and so did I, but to-day I want to worship God with a very hot heart."

She invited us and all the Christians to go to the Inn that evening after supper to "do a big worship."

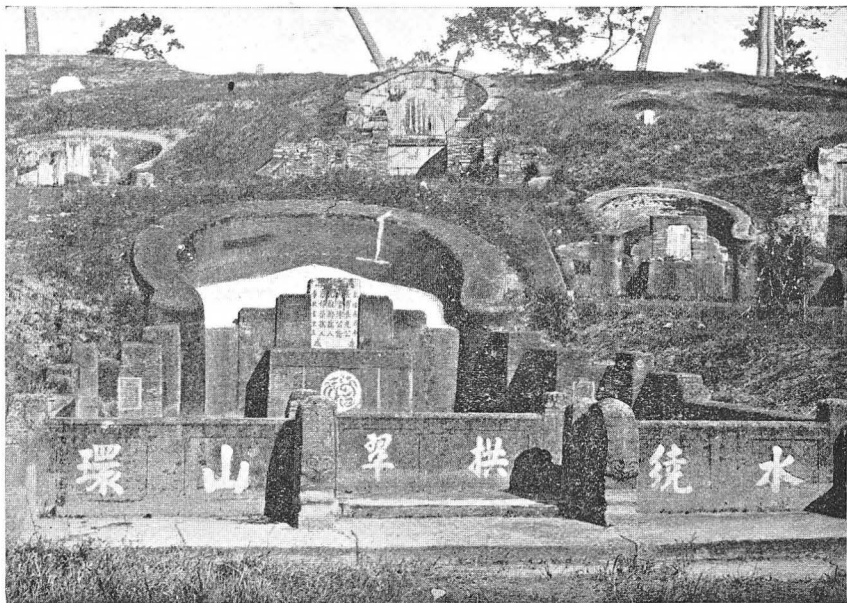
The young man must indeed have believed before making such a request, but what blessing he may have missed by not openly confessing his faith in God.

The heathen think all their happiness and comfort after death depend upon what is done for them in this world. New clothes, money and articles of every-day use are put into the coffin, while strange precautions are taken to keep the evil spirits away from the dead body, around

which they are supposed to congregate. Funerals almost remind one of some ghastly game of hunt the hare, for men are sent in front of the procession to scatter paper money, sometimes on the main road, but more often down side paths, so that the spirits, in their eager search for gain, may lose sight of the coffin and the grave to which it is being carried. A China-man thinks he possesses three souls, and that, when death comes, one goes into the grave and stays there, another into the ancestral tablet, and the third into the next world. All three need care and attention. Offerings of food are constantly placed on the grave, which is cut into the side of a mountain in the shape of a huge horse-shoe.

Incense is daily lighted before the ancestral tablet, while paper-houses, and paper trunks, containing paper clothes, paper money, etc., are burned once a year for the soul in the next world. I remember standing one evening at the head of a long street in Kien-Ning City, and seeing men tending these short-lived bonfires outside almost every house. The Christians have nothing to do with these ceremonies. They rejoice in being redeemed from the power of the grave, and say, "My soul comes from God and goes to God; to-day here, to-morrow in Heaven, where all is joy!" Both in this, and in their freedom from an ever-present dread of evil spirits, the contrast between them and the surrounding heathen is very marked.

Quite a number of us assembled at the Inn that evening. We made our way through groups of awe-stricken people into the inner hall, and there found seats arranged all round; the dead man, dressed in his best clothes, was sitting propped up in the centre.



CHINESE GRAVES.

It was rather a weird scene. The dim light being occasionally lighted up with flashes of brightness, as some late-comer arrived and knocked out the flames of his torch on the stone floor. The service was quiet and solemn. The poor mother was sobbing a little, while her husband, stupid with opium-eating, looked on from behind.

When the last hymn had been sung, she asked help from the Christian men, who, led by her, went through the house collecting idols, idol papers, charms, and everything connected with heathen worship, brought them down the front door steps, and set fire to the pile in the street below.

What a blaze they made that hot June night flaring brightly for a few moments, then gradually smouldering away, until nothing was left of that which had been worshipped and feared for years.

And, as we all waited there, watching for the last spark to die out, it was grand to hear the woman say, "Now my house is clean from the devil's things, Jesus can come in to be its Master."

The "Ten Commandments Inn" was the honourable and unique title by which her house soon became known, for a large scroll on which these were written hung at the head of the hall, in the place from which the principal idol picture had been taken.

Two desires then filled her mind, one, that we should teach her, and the second, that others might be led to the Saviour by her testimony.

It was not easy to teach her, "I am old, with but little understanding," she would say, and indeed there was truth in the remark, for we might go over the same little sentence some forty

times only to hear at the end, "Tell me again, sisters, tell me again, it has not yet entered into me; most likely I will forget." And she probably had forgotten by the next day.

No lodger left the inn without having heard something of the doctrine. Her one idea was to bring people to see us.

"Come to our sisters," she would urge, "they will explain; I am stupid, I only know Jesus has saved me, Jesus has forgiven my sins, Jesus is leading me on the road into Heaven."

And very wonderful was the way in which later on God used this simple witness.

Some time before this, Miss Newcombe had started two weekly prayer meetings, one on Thursday evenings when she asked the Christians to pray for themselves only, or their own immediate families; and the other on Saturdays, when their prayers might include the whole world. It comes rather easier to the Chinese to ask that "the sins of all under Heaven may be forgiven," than to say, "Forgive us our trespasses."

One Thursday evening we had quite a large gathering, when some one called out to the Inn-woman, "Church-mother of the Inn, you have not yet prayed."

"I cannot," she answered, "I am too stupid."

This announcement was greeted by a chorus of, "Do not fear, trust the Holy Spirit to help you; now pray."

She began; then stopped, appealing to us to tell her what to say.

Coming to the rescue we suggested that instead of praying herself she might mention something she really wanted God to do for her, and ask us all to pray about it. There was no hesitation then.

"Pray," she said, "that the old man, my husband, may give up opium, and worship God."

This was too much for the faith of the others. They laughed aloud and, with the customary plain speaking of these village Christians, exclaimed, "Truly you are stupid; that old man who has been eating opium over twenty years, has nearly eaten himself mad, how is he to give it up?"

At that Mrs. Eng-Nu stood up and said, "Our God is very great. He can do everything, we must not have doubting hearts. Jesus can save him."

"True, true, Jesus can save him," echoed many voices. "With very hot hearts we will pray for this one thing."

So they brought unto Jesus one who was sick, and the Lord saw their faith, for it was not many weeks later that this old man, by his own wish, and really trusting in God for help, too weak even to walk, was carried in a chair to the Kien-Ning hospital, where he unflinchingly endured the weary days of bodily misery which come with the breaking-off of opium eating. And then, perfectly cured, he walked back the thirteen miles to his home.

There was a splendid praise meeting in Ciong-Bau that evening.

He soon looked quite twenty years younger, and lost much of his former vacant expression. For a time the old craving occasionally returned, when he would first pray, and then come to us for a little condensed milk, in which his faith was great. But soon even this left him, and he became widely known as "the cured-from-opium man, in the Ten Commandments Inn."

As for the Christians, their delight knew no bounds, and often found expression in such words

as the following :—“ For . . . who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for ? ” (Deut. iv. 7.)

Towards the end of June the heat became intense. At mid-day a thermometer in our rooms seldom registered under 100° F., and the advisability of a change to Ku-Liang was suggested. But the weather tried me wonderfully little, and I obtained leave from Dr. Rigg to spend the coming hotter months in the women's hospital with Miss Johnson.

And so one morning Miss Newcombe left for Ku-Cheng, and I for Kien-Ning, where my happiest China summer was spent, with one who has personally more than fulfilled to me the promised hundredfold reward.

CHAPTER V.

SUMMER SKETCHES.

“I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.”—*Acts xxvi. 17-18.*

KIEN-NING is a picturesque city surrounded by mountains. Its high turreted walls are covered in places with great hanging creepers, while over each of the deeply arched gateways, a watch-man's house has been built and roofed in the usual fantastic way.

On the side by which the river flows, there is always life and noise, for hundreds of crowded junks and smaller boats lie closely moored together.

When coming in from Ciong-Bau, we ferry across the river, enter the city from the east, cross many narrow streets, and, taking the straight road which leads from the west gate for a distance of a mile and a half, we arrive at last at our hospital compound.

The Kien-Ning people are proud and superstitious. Having withstood an attack made upon them by the Tai-Ping rebels, who caused such trouble in China between 1851 and 1865, they quite expected to be equally successful in resisting the few missionaries who arrived at Nang-Wa in 1888.

But they found to their surprise that these foreigners were not to be intimidated; for, when sudden out-bursts of active opposition caused them to leave, their exile was of the shortest possible duration, and back they came, to work with renewed energy.

The following words, spoken by a native about this time, expressed the general opinion:—
“Heaven is allowing them, the Chinese are helpless.”

We, on our side, in utter weakness, could only look up, and say, “Lord, it is nothing with Thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power; help us O Lord our God, for we rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go against this great multitude. For we have no might . . . neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee.” (2 Chron. xiv. 11; xx., 12.)

It was a time of peace throughout the district, while, within the city itself, a large house had lately been bought by the C.M.S. for a church, and was at present in process of adaptation.

There was now an opportunity for free growth among the Christians, who spoke proudly of “Our Worship Hall in our City,” fondly thinking all their troubles were at an end.

Perhaps God, in giving His children this happy restful season, was preparing them for the coming storm, which broke over their heads not twelve months later.

That summer the whole city seemed friendly and, as we walked through its streets, many were the invitations given us to “Come in here, sit awhile, drink tea, and teach.” Open doors were everywhere, and we had to pass by the greater number simply from want of time.

And God was blessing the hospital work, for few were the patients who returned to their homes with hearts untouched by the Holy Spirit working within them.

It was lovely to hear one and another say, “I came so sad—no Jesus. I go away in great peace—Jesus with me.”

We enjoyed watching the contrast between an arrival and a departure. The one so full of fearful anticipation, and the other of regret. But we often wondered at the amount of courage they displayed in placing themselves in our power, as we heard how carefully each one had been warned by friendly neighbours, who knew for a fact that we "cooked and ate babies with our rice, turned boys into girls, made medicine of eyes, and kept a roomful of human bones under our house." It was desperate need which brought them to the point of facing these terrible possibilities, and only when they had despaired of ever getting well under the native doctor's unique and varied remedies.

But sometimes they came for other and sadder reasons.

One day a woman arrived with three little boys, having fled from an opium-eating husband, who was threatening to sell their second child. A few months before, in order to obtain more opium, he had made seventy dollars (£7) by selling the eldest. "Day and night," said the poor mother, "I see my child carried away from me, crying and struggling, as a pig is taken to market."

She was ill with grief, so we were glad to keep her and the boys, whose names were "Everlasting Light," "Pure Water," and "Everlasting Happiness."

The heathen, as if striving for something beyond their reach, not unusually give their children beautiful names, though more often, in order to deceive the spirits, they call the boys especially by such names as "Little dog," "Beggar," "Slave girl," or "Field woman." A particularly well-fed looking child once told us she was known as "Everlasting Starvation"—

which shews with how little sense of discrimination the dread unseen beings are credited.

“Everlasting Light” made great friends with “Ki-Hong,” a twelve-year-old boy, who had been a patient in the hospital for some months, and was now an earnest and true Christian.

He loved the services and hymn-singing, and set himself to learn most of the form of morning prayer by heart, so that the “big worship” on Sundays need not be without “taste.”

“I go home a worshipping man,” he proudly announced on the day of his departure, and returned to take a position in which he was almost immediately strengthened by absolutely refusing to join an idol procession.

When forbidden to go to Church he invited a few school-fellows to his house instead, and held regular little services on his own account, reading, praying, and teaching them all he knew.

Before very long his father also became a Christian, his mother ceased to oppose, and the household idols were put away. Now Ki-Hong is in the C.M.S. boys’ school, hoping some day to become a preacher in Kien-Ning.

Another of our boy friends died in the hospital that summer. He ate a bowlful of snails before an attack of malaria was well over; the fever returned, and rose higher and higher until the young life flickered out.

He left behind him a little five-year-old widow called Mong-Geng, whose relief was great when told that Bi-Chiang had gone to Heaven, for she had always resented his boy-like teasing, and now, in the highest of spirits, she trotted gaily about our house, singing the first line of the “Happy Land” hymn with a second of her own composing—

“There is a happy land,
I will never see him any more.”

But the relief of widow-hood was short, for her father-in-law had a second son—a greater tease—to whom he immediately engaged her.

Bi-Chiang's mother entered the Happy Land almost at the same time, and in her we lost a most valuable hospital matron. She was thoroughly trustworthy, energetic and loving, and even before Miss Johnson arrived to open the women's hospital, under Dr. Rigg, she had most carefully nursed any women who came as patients in a room set apart for the purpose in the students' house.

One of these had been a poor trembling down-cast woman, who, with her two sons, had come for healing. Unaccustomed to kindness, her fear and reserve quickly passed away. Attracted first by the human, and then by the Divine, Love, she gave her heart and life to the Saviour in fullest gratitude, and now she is our matron and city Bible-woman, brimming over with love to all around her.

On the day of her baptism she was given the name of Cie-Aing, which means “Received Grace,” and no other could have been more appropriate, for she has indeed received of His fulness and “grace for grace.”

It is so good to hear her plead with those who have not yet entered into the fold of Christ; she does it in such an original way, and with a certain amount of action.

“Look at me,” she will say in a very doleful voice. Then, rocking herself backwards and forwards, sitting in a most dejected attitude, she will go on to tell how she was sinful, miserable, weary of life, but afraid of death, until a sister

(Miss Rodd, who was staying for a time in the hospital compound) told her of a Saviour Who loved such as her. "Before that, my heart was black like coal, my body was thin, and my face exceedingly ugly; all day I moaned; each morning I awoke sad, very sad, the hours went slowly, slowly by, I was pleased when night came, and yet I feared the darkness. But now," and here she stands up, the tone of her voice becomes cheerful, while her face beams all over with life and joy, "I am fat, my face is good to see, Jesus has washed my heart white, it is all peace, the hours go quickly, quickly by, and all day long I am happy." A new song is indeed in her mouth, "even praise unto God."

Dr. Rigg now gave me my last language examination, and I immediately celebrated the event by making a mistake, which I have never been allowed to forget! We wanted some dates, so, sending a messenger to the city, I calmly told him to buy us a pound of the very best kisses, and to choose good ones, as we intended to give them away!

He listened quietly, without moving a muscle of his face, but it was too good a joke for some women standing by. Shrieking with laughter, they said they had never heard of a sister being short of such things before. The word for kisses is *mi-cu*, and that for dates *mi-cau*. The point of this mistake lies in the fact that kissing is an unknown luxury among the Chinese, and one in which we foreigners do not indulge in public. If ever caught in the act we cause a vast amount of amusement.

"Diàn-sister, have you been buying kisses lately?" is a question which has often been put to me since.

How hot those days were with no coolness anywhere! Cie-Aing's little boy blistered the soles of his feet one morning by running down the stone steps which lead from our house to the men's hospital, upon which the sun was blazing fiercely.

We, outwardly, were always a little more than moist, and inwardly, like the proverbial Irishman, "dry," but for this there was not much remedy, as our drinking-water, which had to be boiled, could find no opportunity of cooling itself. However, in the evenings, a mountain or river breeze would stir through the house, and refresh us wonderfully, and we often went a little way up the hill behind the hospital, and enjoyed happy times together, watching the sun setting over the mountain tops, and the river flowing peacefully at their feet, reflecting all its glory.

Such richness of quiet grandeur turned all our thoughts to praise :—

“He lifts me to the golden doors,
The flashes come and go ;
All Heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her light below,
And deepens on and up ! The gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,
To make me pure of sin.”

Towards night these spells of intense heat were often broken by magnificent storms. The clouds poured water, and the thunder seemed to roll and boom from one mountain peak after another, while the lightning, flashing and quivering across the sky, lighted up the surrounding scenery with a perfect blaze. To us this was grand, and must have been something like what David saw when he wrote words such as those contained in the twenty-ninth Psalm :—

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters: the God of Glory thundereth; . . . the voice of the Lord is powerful; . . . full of majesty . . . the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars . . . divideth the flames of fire . . . shaketh the wilderness."

And above it all, David could see the Lord sitting as King (v. 10). But the heathen are terrified. To them the thunder is a fiercely angry spirit who, in awful wrath, hurls men to death; while the lightning is an attendant spirit, clearing his way, and flashing light upon the offenders who are to be destroyed.

A partial eclipse of the sun frightens them even more. "The dragon of the sky," they say, "is about to swallow our sun."

So the poor little human beings gather quickly into groups, to beat their trays and gongs, making a noise, which, at the furthest, reaches some hundred yards, in the full belief that in this way only can the mighty being be deterred from carrying out his terrible intention. The sun shines again, and they rejoice, for the trays and gongs have been successful.

The dragon of China is everywhere, up in the sky, down in the water, under the earth.

At Nang-Wa we were not allowed to sink a well, in case we might dig too deeply and touch his scales, at which he might be annoyed and turn round, and so upset the whole village into the river.

Tell a Chinaman that the world is round, and that it revolves around the sun, and not the sun around it, that the moon does not shine with her own light, and that the sun, earth and moon are smaller than many of the stars; tell him any well-known astronomical fact, and his contemptuous answer will be:—"Idle words, not to be believed by men of understanding."

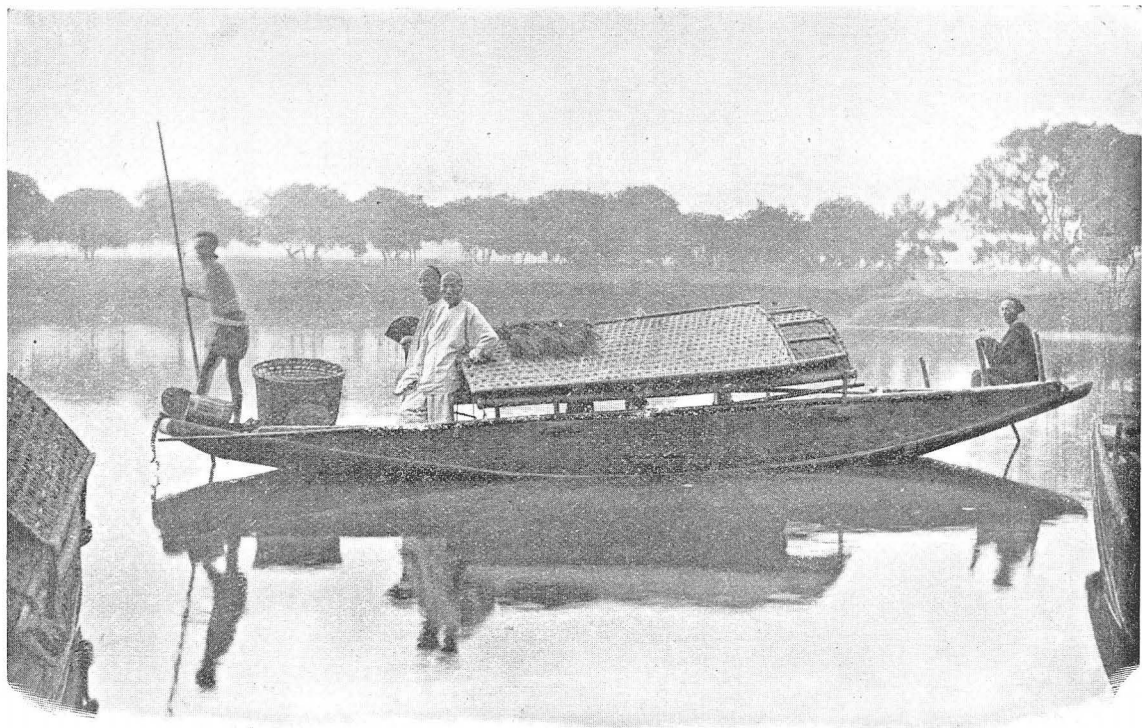
“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.” “Having the understanding darkened,” “Without God in the world.” Why is it so few obey the Voice which says “Go speak My Words unto them,” “I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?”

In September Miss Gardner returned from Ku-Liang, and I went back to Ciong-Bau, where Miss Newcombe had arrived before me. Our new house was finished, so we moved into it at once, and rejoiced in the view of wooded mountains and stream on three sides from an open verandah, after the shut-in feeling of our former abode, where the only outlook had been some sky and many roofs.

A native house-moving is celebrated by a feast, before which friends give scrolls, pictures, or money, and any acquaintance, by sending a few pounds of macaroni, gains a right to join in the festivities. Our hospitality, however, was more limited; for the inevitable feast being followed by a service, we could only invite the Christians. The first thing in the morning these had presented us with a pair of lovely red scrolls, on which their names were written, and also with some brilliantly painted, and extremely ugly pictures, specimens of Chinese art, and worth having on that account. Our service developed into an open prayer-meeting, in which many asked the Lord Jesus to “enter our sisters’ new house, as its only Master,” and also that “crowds and crowds of sisters from the far west side might soon come to live in it.” Some indeed went on to pray that this great company in travelling to them “might not be too uncomfortable, when sitting in rows in the boat, with no room either to stand up

straight or lie down flat for more than forty days"! The sea, which they have never seen, is to them a large river, and the vessels which cross it, boats in which passenger accommodation is not spacious.

For weeks after that, numbers of people from far and near came to see the house. Although very simple, three rooms on the ground floor and three similar ones above them, it struck all our visitors as palatial. Perhaps the general air of cleanliness and light called forth the constant exclamation, "Truly this house is like Heaven!" We had many opportunities during those days of speaking of the Father's House with its many mansions, and of Him who said "I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved."



A CHINESE BOAT.

CHAPTER VI.

“THEY ARE WAITING EVERYWHERE.”

“We wait for light, but . . . we walk in darkness. We grope . . . like the blind: . . . We stumble at noon-day as in the night; we are in desolate places.”—*Isaiah, lix., 9-10.*

IT was delightful to return to Ciong-Bau with examinations over and autumn, our best working time, before us. In South China this season is most beautiful, with cool nights and warm sunny days, while the leaves of many trees and luxuriantly trailing plants turn a brilliant red, and light up the scenery with great flashes of flame-colour.

One Sunday morning soon after our return, the Inn-woman appeared in Church, triumphantly leading a young man. “He lodged with me last night,” she said, “and he is willing to hear the doctrine.”

We looked at his face now and then through the service, and were struck by its quiet, earnest expression, and the eagerness with which he listened.

Coming to us that same evening, he asked a few most intelligent questions, often exclaiming as we answered him, “Truly this doctrine is good!”

His home was in Suing-tê, a village of evil repute on the borders of Ku-Cheng, about thirteen miles from Ciong-Bau.

He walked there the next day, and finding his father at work hammering iron in their blacksmith’s shop, he asked him to come upstairs, and said, “Old man, my father, the true doctrine

is found ; at Ciong-Bau they preach it ; I already believe."

The elder man having listened to all his son could tell him, said, "Certainly the worship of this country is no use, our idols, standing year after year on the shelves, cannot brush the dust from their faces ; how then can they save us ? We will go together to Ciong-Bau, and very carefully enquire into this matter."

The following Saturday evening they arrived, and, before Sunday was well over, they had not only decided to become Christians, but had also invited us to help them to destroy their "no use idols."

Being unable to go to Súing-tê ourselves just then, we sent two Catechists, who returned rejoicing. Never had they seen a more whole-hearted acceptance of the truth. The idols and everything connected with them had been joyfully put away, and the whole family had knelt together and asked for forgiveness of sins.

For some weeks after that, the father and son appeared in Ciong-Bau every Saturday evening, to spend Sunday in listening, learning, and asking questions, returning home on Monday morning.

But this they found impossible to continue, as it left them only four working days, and, being blacksmiths by trade, they could not well afford to lose either the time or money. It also meant a considerable expenditure of strength, for on the road between Súing-tê and Ciong-Bau a high mountain has to be crossed by hours of climbing first up and then down stone steps cut into its sides, making the walk, which is only thirteen miles in length, a particularly toilsome one.

So, buying Bibles, Prayer-books, and hymn books from us, they decided to shut their shop

on Sundays and to “ do a worship ” themselves in their upper room.

Then constant and urgent were the invitations we received to go and stay with them. “ We are like little children,” they said, “ we hardly know anything, we want you to teach us and our women.”

But our village visiting was in full swing at the time, and could not well be interrupted.

While engaged in this visiting, I can recall a few incidents which caused us a certain amount of interest and amusement, each being in its way characteristic of the mind of the people.

One day, in rather an antagonistic place, we had successfully gained the attention of a few women, when a tall literary man approached, and, pointing to a swinging plank-bridge crossing a wide mill-stream close by, he invited me most politely to follow him on to it. I first looked at the man, then at the bridge, and decided to trust myself to both.

We came to a standstill over the middle of the stream, and boys and men from both sides joined us. Immediately, with one consent, they all spat into the water, when dozens of small fish bobbing to the surface received a shower of cake crumbs.

This was repeated several times, and the situation was so absurd that I laughed aloud.

“ See, she laughs. She can see ! ” they shouted. “ Tell us, can you really look through this water ? ”

And when I answered in the affirmative, my guide said, “ We have now proved your eyes are like ours in this respect, but can you not see three feet through solid earth, and do you not know where to find our gold, silver and precious stones ? ”

When I assured him that this was not the case, he carefully escorted me back to *terra-firma*, muttering as he did so, "Very strange, everyone tells me these foreigners can see through earth, but not through water."

This is a common belief, and we seldom walk for any distance without meeting some one who stops to question us on the subject.

In a hamlet some little distance higher up this stream lived a woman, who had been led to believe in God by Mrs. Eng-Nu; but the fear of man was strong upon her, and she seldom came to church. Hearing that we intended visiting her, she at once and secretly sent a messenger to warn us that the men of her village had vowed to shoot the first foreigner who came among them. "Sisters, do not fear," said Mrs. Eng-Nu, "these are the devil's men, they speak the devil's words; we together with Jesus are stronger."

"When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils."

Mrs. Eng-Nu and I arrived on the "strong man's" ground to find that even the messengers of the "Stronger than he" caused fear and consternation, for the streets were empty and the house doors were shut. This, however, enabled us to have a quiet time with our poor little hostess who, ashamed of the reception we had been given, prepared us each a large bowlful of macaroni and several fried eggs.

Then a remarkable coincidence occurred, which caused the warning we had received to flash into our minds. A man, carrying a huge gun, came in and sat down in front of us.

We looked at both man and gun, and were reassured, for one seemed as harmless as the other.

He had simply come from trying to shoot mountain-hens (pheasants) on the neighbouring hills, and had ventured in to look at the foreign woman.

It was the first time I had been in close quarters with a native gun, and I never again wondered why game of any kind was so difficult to obtain.

We were often surprised at the amount of opposition we met with in some of these small places, where even the dogs, which are always numerous, seemed quite in sympathy with their owners, and barked vigorously at the foreigners, to whom no encouragement whatsoever was given to sit and rest awhile.

Passing through a very unfriendly village one day I noticed a young girl sitting by a broken gateway. She looked at me eagerly ; so I, hoping for an opportunity, went up and sat beside her. She was not afraid, but said almost immediately, “ I am waiting for you, from my house I often see you pass, I long to speak to you, my relations prevent me. Your face looks exceedingly happy ; your happiness, what is it ? ”

“ Have you never heard ? ” I asked.

“ Yes,” she answered ; “ they tell me you are not married, you have no man to rule you down, to govern you.”

What sadness lay behind these words ! A life of bondage surrounded by superstition, neglect, and ignorance, in which happiness was unknown, and all longings had to remain unsatisfied.

We had only a few minutes together, and then she slipped away, dreading the consequences which might follow were it known she had been talking to me.

“ I am waiting for you.”

Over and over again these words spoken by that poor girl have come back to me since, and with them the prayer arises, “ Keep us, our Master, from missing, or passing by, any of these Thy little ones, wanting to enquire about the ‘ joy unspeakable ’.”

Oh! the number of people waiting in China and elsewhere for a knowledge of our all-satisfying Jesus!

“ They are waiting everywhere,
Where the fields of earth are fair,
Where the rivers nobly run,
Where the blossoms seek the sun,
Where the hills rise high and grand,
Looking proudly o’er the land—
Waiting! waiting! waiting!

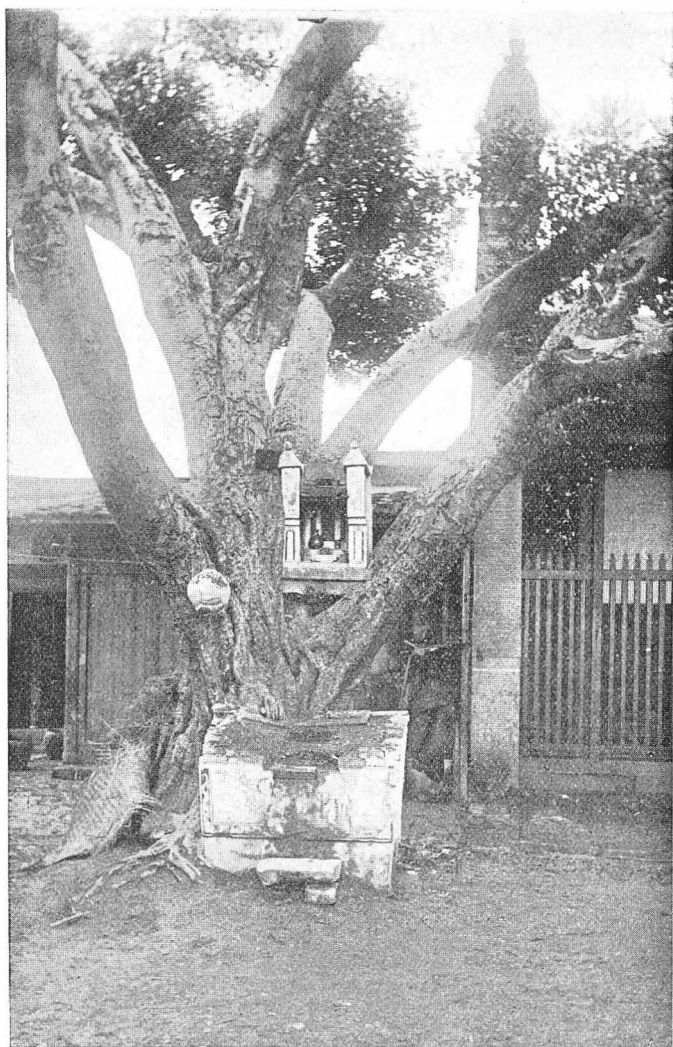
“ For the happy beam of day
That shall chase their gloom away,
For the news so glad and blest
That shall set their heart at rest,
For the peace we know and prize,
And the hope beyond the skies—
Waiting! waiting! waiting!

“ Yet not voiceless or alone,
For their cry to Heaven hath flown,
And the Master waiteth too,
Waiteth, ransomed souls, for you,
Till the life devotion sweet
Be outpoured at His feet—
Waiting! waiting! waiting!”

That autumn I met another waiting one in an idol temple, who told me she had been worshipping our God for years.

“ Tell me how,” I questioned, for her face was without brightness, and her hands were holding a string of beads used in praying to the idols.

“ Three years ago,” she answered, “ a worshipping-God woman in Ciong-Bau told me His Love-heart was great, and ever since I do



A SHRINE IN A BANYAN TREE.

not taste my rice at any meal, until I have thrown some grains on the ground that He may eat.”

“ *Ai-ia!* ” (pronounced “ Ai-yah ”) exclaimed a Christian child who was with me, “ did you not see your hens pick up those grains ? Our God is great, He it is Who gives us our rice.”

Poor woman ! She earned her living by people paying her to say prayers to the idols for the souls of their ancestors. And this she was not willing to give up. “ It is my means of livelihood,” she said, “ without it I starve.”

Again and again we visited her, but each time it was to find her more wretched than before. In looking to the idols for help she remained

“ . . . ever hungry and unfed,
For without the Living Bread.”

“ Prayers to the idols ! ” The very idea is absurd to people who see in it only a speaking to stocks and stones, but those who look closely into the matter know that idol-worship is really a form of spirit—or devil—worship.

This conclusion was forced upon me on one of these afternoons of visiting.

While walking along the road, I saw a crowd of men standing round a small road-side temple. I waited to see what was attracting their attention. Their eyes were fixed upon a man, sitting tailor-fashion on a table in front of the principal idols, who was making horrible contortions with his face, and moving his hands in a peculiar way. A quiet respectably dressed young man, stood before him, asking whether a sick relative would recover or not.

He waited quietly for an answer which came at intervals, short rhyming sentences being repeated in a loud monotonous voice.

Appearing satisfied, he went his way.

When the other man, looking up, caught sight of me, his face changed. With one spring he left the table, and stood but a few paces away. He stared straight in front of him, and then fell at full length upon the ground.

In a few seconds he got up, walked slowly and unsteadily into the temple, and disappeared behind the idols. The unfortunate man had been paid a large sum of money to become devil-posessed, and this he had accomplished by means of days of fasting, and by praying that the spirit of some special idol might enter his body and unravel to him all the mysteries of the future.

People willing to be hired for this purpose are to be found in almost every village. They literally sell themselves to the powers of darkness, and in time become not only temporarily, but permanently, possessed.

Even in the early stages they can easily be recognized by a restlessness of expression, a working of the hands, and a fierceness of resentment when the Name of our Lord is mentioned.

The curtain which divides the seen from the unseen world in China is not a heavy one.

No heathen is superior to a fear of spirits, it influences his most ordinary actions, for, expecting nothing but harm, his life is passed in taking precautionary and propitiatory measures. All pathways wind as circuitously as possible, and gateways into cities and villages are crookedly placed. These and other devices are resorted to in order to puzzle the spirits, and to keep them from reaching their supposed destination.

Boys are thought to be secure from their baneful influence by wearing necklets fastened with locks, and to be safe from the awful calamity of being turned into girls, by wearing girls' clothes,

bangles and earrings, and by being called by girls' names.

A precious only child is carried about with a piece of fishing-net wisped round his neck, a sick person is covered with it, and the same is often hung over bed-room doors, in order to keep the dread beings away.

If these precautions are childish, even more so are the credited dealings of the spirits with an over-credulous, ignorant and superstitious people. A lad suddenly receives a violent slap upon the face from an unseen hand ; or, when walking in the dusk, his heel is gripped, and held tightly for some seconds. Stones are dropped upon roofs, and into bed-rooms. Many and varied are the malicious tricks of the spirits from which no one is safe, with the exception of the Christians, who, rejoicing in freedom from so cruel a bondage, constantly exclaim : “ We belong to Jesus Whom the spirits fear ; they cannot harm us now.”

Happy people ! Brought out from the darkness of the prison-house into “ the glorious liberty of the children of God ” ; and then strengthened by their Deliverer to resist all “ the crafts and assaults of the devil ! ”

For months the Súing-tê family had been urgently inviting us to pay them a visit ; and towards the middle of November I decided, not only to accept this invitation, but also to spend some weeks itinerating among the villages in their direction.

About the same time Miss Newcombe went to the annual Conference in Foo-Chow, when, by her own request, it was arranged that, instead of returning to Kien-Ning, she should go to the Ku-Cheng district, where the need of workers to fill up gaps long left vacant, lay heavy on her heart.

In Kien-Ning we were principally engaged in preparing the soil, sowing the seed and watering the tender shoots, but in parts of Ku-Cheng this had already been done, while a harvest, untended and unwatched, was spoiling and wasting away, for lack of reapers.

The Ciong-Bau Christians, mourning Miss Newcombe's loss, found it difficult to realize the greater need of another place, but they were considerably comforted to hear that Miss Rodd and Miss Bryer, already on their way back from furlough, would soon be with them, and even then were "sitting in a fire-engine boat which did not rest by night or day."

My itinerating companion was to be a woman known by name to many—our dear Gaing-Seng*—with whom love for her Master and earnest seeking for souls form the ruling passions of a most self-sacrificing life.

Her father was a native of Ku-Cheng—a literary man, who, growing fond of his little daughter, had actually taught her to read.

She had a happy disposition, and knew little of pain until her tenth birthday, when she entered upon a year of torture. For then her mother commenced binding the poor child's feet, drawing the bandages more tightly each morning, bruising, crushing, breaking the bones, but ever with increasing satisfaction, as she fashioned her daughter's feet to the required size, and felt how thoroughly the girl's welfare was being attended to.

Under such treatment Gaing-Seng grew thin and weak. Often at night-time, when the pain was very bad, she just put her head under the

* For this native worker's story see *Quaing-Seng's Dream*. ½d. C.E.Z M.S., 27, Chancery Lane, W.C.

wadded quilt and cried. Then the kind-hearted father, distressed at what he only thought of as the inevitable suffering of girlhood, would occasionally whisper, “ Daughter, loosen the bandages, your mother is asleep ” ; thus relieving her sufficiently to allow of a few hours’ rest.

By the time she was eleven years old, her feet measured exactly two and a half inches in length.

Soon after this, a marriage was arranged for her, and she was sent off to live in her husband’s distant village. Here she was only one of several daughters-in-law living in the same house, over whom the mother-in-law reigned supreme.

For a while Gaing-Seng was happy enough, and the days passed quickly, as she helped in the household duties and learnt to embroider beautifully.

But soon one sorrow followed another in rapid succession. First, her husband became ill with consumption, and was quite unable to work. Then year after year passed away, during which time no child came to gladden them, and the poor little wife was in bitterness of soul.

When a baby boy was bought for her, she loved him almost as if he had been her own son, but one day he fell sick and died, leaving her with empty arms and a desolate heart.

From earliest childhood she had been conscious of sin, and this she thought must be the cause of all her trouble.

More and more earnestly she prayed to the idols for deliverance, and made constant offerings to those that were possessed of a reputation for power.

“ They cannot save me, they cannot save me ! ” was her cry in times of great anguish.

Then, morning and evening, she went outside the house and, looking up to the sky, burned a few sticks of incense to the Sun-god, and to a Being greater than he, Whom in her inmost heart she believed to exist.

Thus, feeling after, she at length found the One Who never fails those who seek Him.

One night she had a dream, in which some one with a beautiful face and dressed in long, white, shining garments called to her, saying, "Gaing-Seng, Gaing-Seng, to-morrow morning you will hear of a Saviour."

Awakening full of joy, she quickly finished the necessary work of the house, and waited. Before long a shadow fell across the threshold. Her dream had become a reality for, looking up, she saw a man quite unknown to her standing in the doorway.

He greeted her, while she quickly invited him in, handed the customary tea, and said: "Have you not come to tell me of a Saviour, Who can save me from my sins?"

How eagerly she listened to his answer, and as she listened she believed.

Her visitor was a Christian teacher, belonging to the American Church Mission, and the task given him by his Master that morning, was one the angels might well have envied.

Gaing-Seng at once passed on the "glad tidings of great joy" to her husband, who accepted the truth as naturally as a child; and, a few months later, when entering the Home Land, he assured her they would one day meet again.

And now a great hatred of the idols arose in her heart. One by one she burnt and destroyed them all, taking delight in the deed, as she thought of the many tears, prayers, and offerings vainly

presented before them in her times of utter desolation.

This stirred up no little opposition. “ How dare she—a woman—presume so to treat the gods of her ancestors ? ” exclaimed her eldest brother-in-law one day, as he cruelly beat her with the leg of a broken table.

Gaing-Seng, shewing no anger, only prayed that “ likeness to Jesus might appear in (her) body,” and that forenoon she took special care to prepare him a dinner of his favourite vegetables.

Bringing in bowl after bowl to set before him, she saw his face becoming “ red hot,” but he neither looked towards, nor spoke to, her.

Soon after this she returned to her former home in the neighbourhood of Ku-Cheng city, and thus was brought within reach of Christian services and teaching.

Sunday after Sunday, in spite of weariness and pain, she joyfully walked five miles to church on her tiny bound feet.

Then she was taken into the women’s school, and her happiness was complete. “ Like Heaven the same ” were those days in which God’s wonderful plan of salvation became clearly revealed to her mind, making her rejoice and expand, much as a flower does in the sunlight.

Verse by verse she learnt Miss Havergal’s hymn :

“ Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee ! ”

praying over every clause, until she came to the fifth verse :

“ Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee,”

which decidedly puzzled her, for how could poor crushed feet be “ swift and beautiful ” ?

One night, while pondering over this in bed, the thought flashed into her mind that God never intended feet to be so small, and she at once decided to leave off the tight bandages.

But the other women in the school quite scoffed at the idea, and were angry with her for even suggesting it. "We should be laughed at," they said, "for our feet would grow big and ugly!"

But Gaing-Seng, willing to become a laughing-stock for Jesus' sake, quietly made herself larger shoes.

Before many weeks had passed, every one of them had followed her good example. And now, almost invariably, both in Ku-Cheng and Kien-Ning, when a woman becomes a Christian, she immediately unbinds her feet. This is usually attended with pain and discomfort for about ten days, after which there is great rejoicing in the possession of new walking powers.

From the Ku-Cheng School Gaing-Seng was sent to a mountain village, where she opened a little school in connection with the Church; and here her work was most satisfactory.

Then, in 1889, she was chosen as the Bible-woman to accompany Miss I. Newcombe and Miss Johnson, when they went to open women's work in the Kien-Ning district. From that day until now, blessed and blessing, her influence has been invaluable. Loyal to the Master and loving towards us, brave and cheery under every circumstance, constantly ill and occasionally in bodily danger, with an ever-increasing faith, her "path . . . is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

CHAPTER VII.

AN ITINERATING TOUR.

“The Lord is my light and . . . the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”—*Psalms xxvii. 1.*

“**A**ND when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them.”

No other verse could more fitly introduce an account of my first itinerating tour, for the comfort and strength contained therein touched its every hour.

Gaing-Seng had started a day or two sooner, so I left Ciong-Bau alone. I was escorted to the village gateway by many of the Christians, whose good-bye calls, “Slowly, slowly go; quickly, quickly return. We will pray for you,” mingled with my answer, “Together, together pray,” until their voices died away in the distance.

For awhile the road led through villages in which we had visited, then, leaving these behind, it brought us to the foot of a mountain, where, allowing the chair and coolies to follow, I began the steep ascent on foot. During this climb, my scanty supply of courage melted away.

I remembered how entirely I was thrown upon my own resources, and felt conscious of shortcomings in speaking the language, and fearful of not knowing how to act in sudden emergencies.

But when the top was reached, and I stood to rest awhile, looking down on the valley, lying far beneath, and at the beautiful stretch of country beyond, my Master in infinite tenderness drew

near and said, " My child, when I put you forth, I go before you ; nothing depends on you, only to watch for My footsteps and place your feet in them ; to hear My whispers, and speak them aloud ; to forget yourself, and remember Me."

Waiting there, quite alone with Him, every doubt, every fear vanished.

It was a time of unutterable sweetness, and one in which to prove what a marvellously complete connection there is between the " Go " and the " Lo ! I am with you always " of St. Matthew, xxviii., 19-20.

" Christ be with me, Christ within me,
 Christ behind me, Christ before me,
 Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
 Christ to comfort and restore me,
 Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
 Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
 Christ in hearts of all that love me,
 Christ in mouth of friend and stranger."

" So I, my Father, cling to Thee,
 And thus, I every hour,
 Would link my earthly feebleness
 To Thine almighty power."

This itinerating tour had a three-fold object.

1. To lodge in a village twelve miles from Ciong-Bau, where Miss Fleming had spent a week the year before and had found a great willingness to hear the doctrine.
2. To stay with and teach the Súing-tê family.
3. To accept an urgently repeated invitation given to us by a relation of the Ciong-Bau Inn woman, to bring our Message to his home in a distant town.

Gaing-Seng, waiting at A-Iong—our first destination—met me with a joyful face, and said, " These people are hungering and thirsting to hear, our opportunity is exceedingly good."

Then leading the way to an inn, in which she had secured a very fine loft, we quickly arranged our possessions, and stood to receive the crowd of men, women and children who came to question and stare; continuing to do both, without intermission, until about ten o'clock, when, pleading tiredness, we went to our small and very dark bedroom, but not to sleep, until the Inn woman had thoroughly examined almost everything we had brought in our load-baskets!

Always, when itinerating, for the first three days, we have scarcely time to eat, certainly not in private. From early morning to late at night numbers of people come in relays, gradually lessening as the time goes on, leaving those really interested in the new doctrine; until by the end of perhaps a week we are left in comparative quietness, to teach the few real enquirers, and visit the surrounding villages.

But here, in A-Iong, we were very disappointed, for when the usual curiosity died away, no real interest was taken in our Message, except by two or three old women and a few children. Several small girls and a boy constantly came to learn verses "about the things of Jesus," for which we were glad, for time spent in teaching the little ones, who come of their own accord, is never wasted.

And how we longed and prayed for our hostess! Weary of life, with a wretched opium-eating husband, she was attracted to Jesus; His love, His promises touched her. She was almost persuaded to become a Christian, but it would mean the giving up of many things and it might mean persecution.

"To-night I will decide," she said one morning, "I want time to think."

God or Satan !

Oh, what a battle waged that day ! Eternal issues pending upon the choice of a human will ! Courage, poor woman, help is sure, and the angels of God are waiting to carry the joyful news of victory to swell the song of praise in Heaven.

But, with a ghastly eagerness, the enemy of mankind is also watching for an opportunity, in which to rivet the chains of your bondage more tightly, and to drag you down, down to darkness and death.

Towards night she came to our loft ; the expression of her face told us nothing, and we feared to ask.

“ Sisters,” she said, “ I have almost decided to become a worshipping-God person.”

“ No, no ! ” shrieked her little daughter, as she threw herself into her mother’s arms. “ You must not, you must not, say you will not. Oh promise only to worship idols ! ”

“ Very well,” exclaimed her mother, pushing the girl away roughly, “ I have now decided,” and without even speaking to us, she got up and went downstairs.

Thus the powers of darkness triumphed, having used a child as their tool to ruin a soul. Did they feel secure in the conquest ? It may be so, for a heart seems to harden against the God Whom it has deliberately rejected.

The Kien-Ning people possess a remarkable knowledge of geography, with which it is as well to be acquainted before living in their out-lying villages.

Centuries ago a China-man wrote a kind of fairy tale, describing such insignificant countries as probably existed beyond the boundaries of the “ Middle Kingdom ” of the world, under imaginary

names. Among these, perhaps the best known are :—" The hole in the chest country," " The land of cannibals," " The home of the red-haired race," and a country only inhabited by women.

The first named is decidedly the most remarkable, for there the people do not use their mouths when eating, they put all food straight into their chests ; and instead of travelling, like civilized beings, in sedan-chairs, they are carried on long bamboo poles put through this hole.

From one of these places, barbarians such as ourselves are supposed to come ; and the questions asked, bearing upon the subject of our nationality, are often amusing. Over and over again, when itinerating, women have come to feel my chest in order to find the hole, and, upon being satisfied that it really does not exist, they have exclaimed, " Truly her chest is hard like ours, if her hair were more shining and blacker, and her eyes less mildewed (blue), she would resemble us, and be almost nice-looking."

Of late years Japan, England, and Russia have become known by name. Japan through the war ; and England in connection with the opium traffic.

" Is England or Japan the nearest to China ? " is a question often asked by a Kien-Ning man, displaying a decided vagueness as to locality.

One of the first villages we visited from A-Iong was beautifully situated, being built in a semi-circle on the bend of a stream ; and to it no foreigner had ever been before ; a fact, strangely enough, which caused neither fear nor excitement on our arrival.

Slowly finding our way to an open rest-house, we were surrounded by a few people, whose

indifference gradually melted away as, for the first time, they heard the story of God's wonderful love. One woman listened eagerly. Her eyes were fastened upon our faces and she took in every word. When we had finished, she looked straight at us, and said, "Fifty-eight years I have been in this world; for nearly fifty years I have been longing to hear of a Saviour, but until to-day no one came to tell me of Him. Now I, an old woman, with a glad heart, go home, and will pray to this Jesus to forgive my sins and to lead me along the road to Heaven."

Then she quietly walked away.

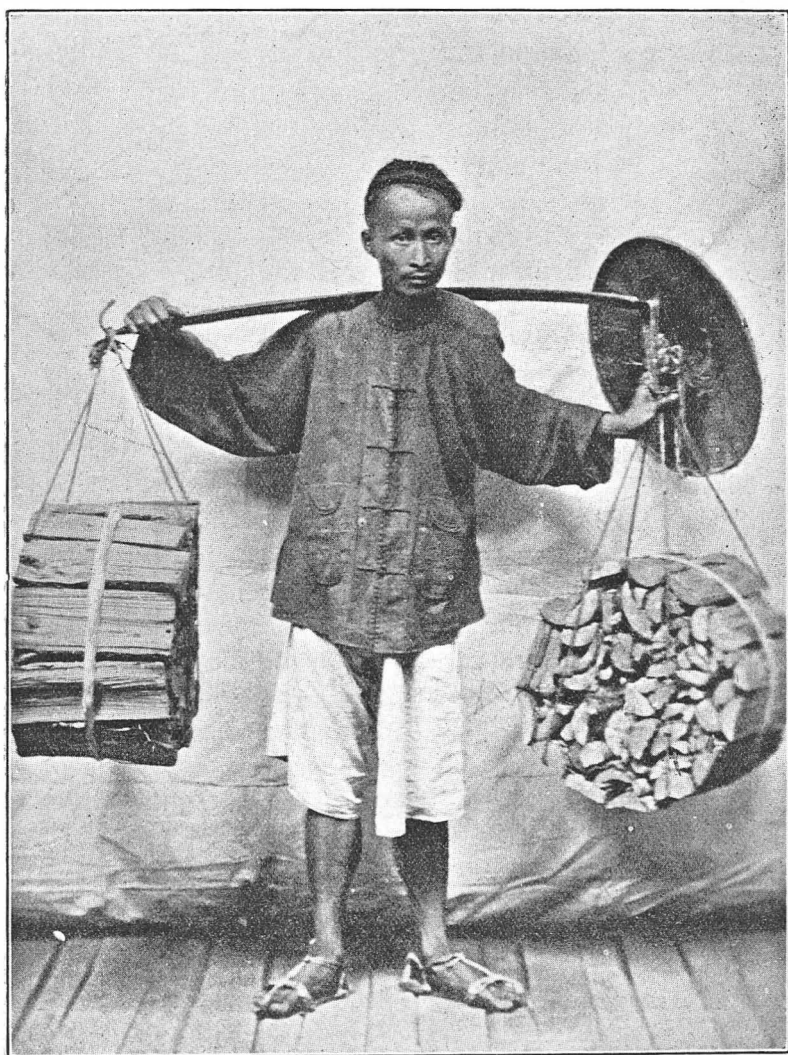
A little while ago, one, who closely walks with God, gave me the following thought:—

"May we not almost see our Lord Jesus standing in these heathen villages, with arms outstretched in a yearning love towards His own chosen children, who are ignorant of His presence?"

The honour, the joy of making Him known to them, has, in the working out of a plan beyond our finite comprehension, been entrusted to us. But we are slow to "claim the high calling angels cannot share." Oh! How can we bear to leave Christ waiting there, looking in over-whelming pity upon those He died to save, who are bowed down under their load of sin, and sick with unsatisfied longings?

Do we remember that, in neglecting them, we are neglecting the Lord we profess to love; and in shutting our ears to their cry of pain, we are hardening our hearts against His pleading?

Surely, there is wonder in Heaven at our disregard of the grand privilege, and great rejoicing in His joy, when anyone who has claimed the privilege brings even one waiting soul into touch with the waiting Saviour!



A WOOD CARRIER.

A reception given us, a day or two later, in a village still further away, was of a different description, and is most amusing to look back upon.

We had but entered its gates when the cry, "A foreigner has come! A foreign woman has come!" was shouted from one to another.

The appearance of a fierce, man-eating tiger might have had the same effect, for a scene of confusion immediately ensued. Mothers shrieked for their boys, dogs barked wildly, and children ran here and there in terror, not knowing where to go. This only lasted for a few moments, and was followed by complete silence. All excitement had vanished behind closely-barred doors.

Gaing-Seng and I quietly walked down a deserted street. At the very end, we came upon a group of men, to whom we gave the usual greeting, "Have you eaten your dinner yet?"

This being answered, we came a pace nearer, and ventured upon another remark, but found that as we advanced, they retreated.

Suddenly, to a man they disappeared! Dignity forgotten, they ran away, leaving the woman who might do such terrible things standing alone, with a rather crest-fallen Gaing-Seng.

We at once decided to look for an inn, in order to procure some food, hoping, by that means, to make them realize we were only ordinary human beings. Our search being successful, the terrified inn woman, at arms' length, handed us each a bowl of rice, together with a few strips of pickled ginger. Then, beside a small table in the doorway, we sat eating, chatting, and laughing, conscious of being watched from somewhere.

A few men appeared in the street outside, and stood looking at us. We, knowing they were

making up their minds to some plan of action, tried to appear perfectly unconcerned.

One of them came forward, a hero of bravery, for was he not going to speak to the foreign woman ?

“ I ask you,” he said, “ do you eat man’s flesh ? ”

“ No,” I answered, “ do you ? ”

At this his face changed ; he looked at me, returned to the little company, and repeated my words, laughing as he did so.

Now our opportunity had come. If you can make a China-man laugh with, or at you, and join him in it, the day is carried !

We went out at once, and before long fear was forgotten, but not until they had fully satisfied themselves that we had neither come from the cannibal country, nor any other such place.

The crowd, which surrounded us, increased to such an extent that we suggested that a house would be a more convenient place in which to speak of our “ most important and very good news.” This suggestion was immediately followed by several pressing invitations. We had a wonderful afternoon.

Gaing-Seng’s joy was overflowing, for a woman, to whom she spoke, confessed her need of a Saviour, and gladly and readily believed on the Lord Jesus.

Towards evening we left them, escorted to the gateway by those who had fled from us only a few hours before, and followed by the sound of many voices giving the farewell call, “ Slowly, slowly go ; come again, come again ”—a cry still unanswered, for the need in other places being greater, we have had no opportunity to return. “ The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few.”

Having spent a fortnight in A-long, we went on to Súing-tê, where, instead of lodging in a heathen inn, we had a Christian family with whom to stay.

What a welcome was given us! "At last, a sister has come to teach!" Their gratitude knew no bounds.

The Súing-tê people have not a good reputation; they are rough, independent, and opposed to foreigners. But now, one light was shining in the darkness which surrounded them, and one household counted it a privilege to receive the Lord's messengers.

From the moment we arrived, the little home was crowded with men, women, and children from outside, who came in to inspect us. It so distressed the family, when any among them shewed an inclination to rudeness that we had often to say, "Do not mind, we are glad they should come and find out the truth for themselves."

But soon, growing impatient, they remonstrated, and said, "Sister, you have travelled from far to teach us, these people are eating up our learning time."

And so we arranged that the front door should not be opened in the mornings until about ten o'clock, and that it should be shut again towards dusk.

With great eagerness the household took advantage of these quiet times. The street people, angry at being shut out, knocked loudly and long for admittance, and made a disturbance which troubled only myself, for the family would say, "Do not mind, Sister, do not mind, go on teaching, the bars against our doors are strong."

Long before day-light we could hear one and another going over the subjects learnt the evening

before ; or, perhaps, in the middle of the night a restless baby would be hushed to sleep by the repeating of the Commandments.

Bible stories, verses, the Creed, choruses ! Faster far than we could teach, they wanted to learn.

At our mission stations we are accustomed to hold a prayer-meeting every Saturday, to ask that the Christians, especially those living away from human help among opposing heathen relations, may be enabled to keep God's Day holy, and that His blessing may rest upon the services.

We tried to start a similar prayer-meeting at Súing-tê, but not with much success, for only the father and son could summon up sufficient courage to pray aloud.

The following Sunday afternoon a little nine-year-old boy came to me, looking disturbed. "Sister," he said, "you told us last night that God is willing we should ask Him about everything. Now our cock and hen have strayed, may we pray that they may be sent back ?"

"Certainly," we answered, "go down and tell any of your family, who care to join in praying about this matter, to come upstairs."

Before long, they had all assembled, and each one, from the old man and woman even to the children, asked, in turn, that if the cock and hen had only strayed, their heads might be turned towards the homeward road, and that, if they had been stolen, the thief might repent, and restore them.

"Now," said the little boy, "I will go to the street, and watch for their return."

It grew dark. "Come in, and shut the door," called the father, and the child reluctantly obeyed. "Anyway," he muttered, "I will get up at

daybreak ; they may then be waiting on the doorstep."

At breakfast time he was cross and silent, but afterwards said, "I do not think God can hear us, we all prayed for our cock and hen and still we are without them ; there is now no need to trouble ourselves, for by this time they must be cooking in the pot of the man who stole them."

The answer given him by the old woman of the house shewed me the meaning of this incident. "You must not," she exclaimed, "ever say again that God does not hear us. He always hears us, but He did not want us to have them back."

The boy was silenced, and so was I, in praise to the Father, for having taught them, in His own way, that our prayers are not always answered as we think best.

Only a few days later God strengthened and honoured their faith in a very wonderful way.

One morning, while teaching the women, we were startled by hearing loud and angry voices shouting in the shop below.

The moment they ceased, the young man came rushing up to us, excited and very distressed.

"*Ai-ia!*" he exclaimed, "we are all destroyed ; sad, sad, the devil is strong, his men are strong ; we, what are we to do ?"

Becoming calmer, he told us that the great man of the village, who was in charge of all the idol processions and temples, had come to warn them that unless they joined in and subscribed to a festival which was to take place within three days, their house would be pulled down, and they themselves hunted away from the place.

"Do you remember the subject spoken of at prayers last night ?" we asked.

"Yes," he answered, "That our Jesus is trustworthy. He understands all. He can do all."

The words came to him with a new power, his face changed, he ceased pacing up and down the room, sat down and thought for a moment, and then said, "Our Jesus is the strongest, stronger than the devil, stronger than the devil's men. We belong to Him, we are trusting Him. He will help us."

"Do you remember," we again asked, "the chorus you all sang so gladly yesterday?"

"I remember, I remember!" He exclaimed, "truly we, with our Jesus, have nothing to fear." Then, leaving us, he went back to work, singing a very simple translation of the words:—

"Trusting as the moments fly,
Trusting as the days go by,
Trusting Him whate'er befall,
Trusting Jesus, that is all."

In the days that followed, this hymn was continually sung by the different members of the family. "Why are you not afraid?" the neighbours questioned, wonderingly, "great trouble is awaiting you, and yet you sing, you are happy."

"Our hearts are all peace," they answered, "the Jesus we are worshipping is strong, He will keep us safely."

The old man lived praying. We once found him kneeling on the tiny landing at the top of the ladder stairs, and waited to pass, for he, being a little deaf, did not hear us coming. When he stood up again, he said, "Sister, I had to pray quickly, a little fear was in my heart, it is now quite gone."

There was some consultation on the procession morning, as to the advisability of treating the

day as a Sunday, by shutting the shop doors, which opened on the street, and assembling in the upper room for prayer. But on the principle that

“They who trust Him wholly,
Find Him wholly true,”

they decided to act as if nothing unusual were about to happen.

It must have been between ten and eleven o'clock when we heard the clanging noise of the idol-procession music. At first in the distance, then drawing nearer; but the hammering in the shop below did not cease. We heard the tramp of feet, the sound of many voices.

Was the procession stopping? No one spoke. We all only waited breathlessly, until we realized that the whole thing had passed by.

Then the father and son, throwing down their irons, rushed up to us, their faces beaming with excitement and joy, as they exclaimed, “Truly, truly our God, our Jesus, is trustworthy. The man who threatened us was there himself, he never turned his head, he is strong, but our Jesus is stronger.”

And so their days of trial and trust were followed by triumph.

No human explanation was given as to the reason why they were not attacked, “But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; He is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them . . . from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.” (Psalm xxxvii., 39-40.)

“Let them ever shout for joy, because Thou defendest them.” (Psalm v., 11.)

We were greatly amused, a few days later, at the excitement caused by the arrival of a box

containing my home letters, and some bread and other provisions, kindly sent from Ciong-Bau by Miss Rodd and Miss Bryer, who had just returned from furlough.

One of the children announced from the roof to the next door neighbour that "Diàn-sister was about to eat a piece of foreign bread, made from our own flour," and it was not many minutes before our room was crowded with people who, not content with looking, wanted either to smell or taste the bread.

We gave them a little, some of which they returned, rather the worse for wear, wondering how foreigners eating such a tasteless thing instead of rice could have strength in their bodies!

This and similar experiences, confirmed my opinion as to the expediency of eating only native food, if possible, when itinerating in places where our extraordinary doings are not familiar.

One evening, just before the close of our visit to Súing-tê, we were returning from an out-lying village, when a group of literary men, confronting us in the narrow street, said so vile a speech to Gaing-Seng that the poor little woman stood still for a moment, her face growing crimson, and the tears started to her eyes.

Then, turning towards them, she made the following beautiful answer:

"*Ai-ia!* You have given me a drop of sorrow, but my God is taking that drop to Heaven, where He will turn it for me into a cup of blessing, and so I can thank you."

They stood aside and we passed on, having been reminded of words spoken long long ago, "For our light affliction, which is but for a

moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

We had quite a sad parting from our Christian family, after a very happy fortnight together, spent in learning the things of God, and in which, having more fully realized our oneness in Christ Jesus, we had been drawn near to one another.

“ ‘ From glory unto glory ! ’ our fellow-travellers still
Are gathering on the journey ! The bright electric thrill
Of quick instinctive union, more frequent and more sweet,
Shall swiftly pass from heart to heart in true and tender beat.

“ And closer yet and closer the golden bonds shall be,
Enlinking all who love our Lord in pure sincerity ;
And wider yet and wider shall the circling glory glow,
As more and more are taught of God that mighty love to
know.”

CHAPTER VIII.

A STRANGE EXPERIENCE.

“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.”—*St. John xii. 36.*

LENG-CIONG, our third and final destination; was only some eight miles from Súing-tê, but no foreigner had ever been along the road leading there; even the names of the villages we passed through were unknown to us.

Having with difficulty procured a sedan-chair for Gaing-Seng, I set out walking with my load-man, thus giving ample opportunity for inspection, which generally took place from a safe distance.

“The whiteness of the foreign woman’s skin,” and the wonderful walking powers due to her “enormous feet,” were subjects of much comment.

When the journey was almost over, Gaing-Seng, who had arrived first, met me with a very troubled face. “We must return,” she said, “the devil’s men are strong here. They were like mad when they heard you were coming, and say no foreign woman is to enter their village.”

“Give us our money and let us go, we can carry no more to-day,” urged the chair coolies, looking both excited and frightened.

The time being about five p.m. it was impossible to go back to Súing-tê; Gaing-Seng could not walk far, and there was no place within reach where the night might be spent.

“And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them,” I remembered.

"Sister," said Gaing-Seng again, "Jesus must have many people to be saved here, or the devil would not so fear our coming, and try to keep us away."

Yes, Jesus had gone before, and was waiting for us; so, paying the coolies, who quickly departed, we asked for the never-failing guidance, and decided to go to an inn, which Gaing-Seng had noticed just outside the village, and wait there, until the man who had so constantly invited us arrived to bring us to his house.

We quietly walked on. The men and boys who surrounded the inn, standing aside to let us pass. They seemed afraid, of which we were glad, knowing from experience how such fear can pass away.

The poor inn-woman was cowering by the kitchen stove, so we just waited in the open guest-hall, chatting to each other as naturally as we could, for no one would answer our questions and the silence all around us was becoming oppressive.

Just then the load-man appeared. Upon receiving his money, he lost no time in leaving, and with him our last link with the outer world was gone.

The situation being far from pleasant, we were wondering how to change it, when the man who had invited us came in, apologizing profusely for the reception we had been given. He had mistaken the day of our arrival, or would have come to meet us, but now we must leave the inn and go to his house.

Joyfully accepting, and thinking, "All's well that ends well," we followed him through the silent streets to a large building, the front door of which was barred and bolted from the inside.

Our host knocked. No answer. He knocked more loudly. Still no answer.

The crowd which surrounded us increased. Becoming desperate, he gave vent to his feelings by a most vigorous knocking. Whereupon some women looked down from the roof, and shouted an amount of angry abuse, each outburst of eloquence ending with the statement, "No foreign woman shall ever cross our threshold."

This aroused the people in the street, whose sympathies were entirely against our hen-pecked man. At last, thoroughly exasperated, he angrily faced them.

As there was not a second to be lost, I quickly ascended the house steps, and also faced them, and, thanking them for their kind reception of us, I said, how good an opportunity we had truly had of proving the truth of their world-wide reputation for politeness.

The varying expressions upon several faces, both of surprise and interest, amused me, and I laughingly told them that the foreign woman and her friend were very tired, and felt quite certain that no one present would wish them to spend the night on the road; then, pointing to the inn, at which we had first arrived, I asked them kindly to escort us back to it.

After a short consultation they agreed to do this. But even now, our troubles were not quite at an end, for every room in the inn was apparently occupied.

We climbed to the grain loft, but it was open to the air on one side and the floor was not fully boarded. Then I noticed a tiny place sloping down under the roof, so we looked in, and decided to take possession of it.

Our would-be host was greatly distressed at such a lack of proper accommodation; but we soon comforted him and sent him away.

It was almost dark by this time, so, quickly fitting in two narrow board-beds, we tried to make our lodging habitable. Any attempt at cleaning was out of the question, for sooty grime hung heavily from the low rafters, and the walls were thick with the smoke of years. Only in one place were we able to stand upright.

Clouds of smoke arising from the kitchen stove beneath, brought the water to our eyes, and sent it down our cheeks in a continuous blackened stream. Our plight was such that when Gaing-Seng, in a fit of genuine laughter, exclaimed, "Diàn-sister, if only your foreign-country-mother could see you now, she would not know you!" I fully agreed with her, for the unavoidable knocking against the rafters had soiled our faces beyond all recognition. But what did it matter? Such outside "distresses" are of little account, and, as Gaing-Seng said many a time that evening, "Never mind, sister, never mind; truly it is dirty here, but that is of no importance when there are souls to be saved. Heaven will be clean."

The inn-woman and her little girl became comparatively friendly, and brought us some rice and vegetables for supper, and then we went to bed.

Gaing-Seng, like a tired child, fell asleep at once, but the rats, which were trying to get at some grain rice in a tub, upon which the boards of my bed were resting, kept me too lively to follow her example.

The night was far advanced when I suddenly heard the clanging music of an idol procession, together with the tramping of many feet. I felt sure it must mean the disposal in some way of

the foreign woman. But there was nothing to be done but just to lie still and wait.

Gaing-Seng was so ready for whatever might happen, that I decided not to awaken her. To me fear was impossible, for the consciousness of my Master's presence became an intense reality.

The procession drew nearer and nearer, and then passed by, when I almost immediately fell asleep.

“When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked. . . . For the Lord shall be thy confidence.” (Prov. iii., 24-26.)

The following morning we heard that on one night in the year an idol in a temple some little way from the village required special worship. Owing to a dread of evil spirits the Chinese seldom go out after dark, so it was strange that we should have arrived just the evening before such an unusual expedition was to take place.

All through the next day we were visited by numbers of men who, though not in the least rude, were quite determined to find out the reason of our presence among them. When they were thoroughly convinced that we had come to steal neither their underground treasures, nor their children for food, nor their eyes for the making of medicine, neither was our object to change boys into girls, they gladly listened as, bit by bit, we told them the wonderful news of a free salvation.

Becoming really interested, they passed on our words from one to another, often adding how mistaken they had been in this foreigner, who could not possibly be one of those dreadful beings

of such evil repute, for did she not wear their dress, eat their rice, and tell about a doctrine good to hear? She must have travelled from the far west country, simply to work out some merit for herself.

And they were quite reassured when, towards evening, our dear old man from Súing-tê came in. Gaing-Seng's chair-coolies had given him such a dreadful account of our reception upon the previous evening, that he at once set out to see whether we were in any need of help. "Sisters, you are safe, thank God, thank God!" he exclaimed.

Then, turning towards the men who were surrounding us, he very simply and earnestly preached to them himself, and told them to listen carefully to our words, "For," he added, "these sisters have not come to ask you to believe in a foreign God, but in the Father God, to Whom we all belong."

It must have been long after dark when he arrived home again that night, having for our sakes walked more than sixteen miles of rough, mountainous road.

After that, women were allowed to come to us, and the hours spent in teaching went quickly by, for the greater number were keenly anxious to hear the things of Heaven. Fear was quite gone, friendliness and curiosity having taken its place. Once an amusing incident occurred.

An old woman having toiled up the steep, ladder stairs to our crowded loft, stood listening for a few moments, and then exclaimed, "Hear her words! The whole world speaks our language. I have always said so, now I know!" Fully convinced upon this point, she slowly made her way down again.

Many pathetic scenes may be found every day in a heathen country. Just at this time we came across one of peculiar interest, the account of which cannot fail to draw out the deepest sympathy of which one human heart is capable of feeling for the sorrows of another.

The picture is that of an old woman, aged about seventy years, sitting on a form with a great joy upon her face. "All my life long," she is saying, "I have been burning incense night and morning, while standing outside my front door, to the God you tell me of. I knew of Him in my inside heart, but why did no one come to speak to me of Him until now?"

Waiting to know for seventy years! And all the time One was waiting to receive her!

That evening, as people came in and out of the inn, we heard them talking in commiserating tones of some one who was "Much to be pitied—truly very pitiable—sad to death."

Was it our old woman?

The following morning we went to find out, and Gaing-Seng burst into tears at what we saw. The face so full of joy only the day before was bruised almost beyond recognition.

Her daughter-in-law came forward, and said, "I will beat her like that every time she speaks of not worshipping the idols; if she again refuses to burn incense, I will beat her dead."

She looked capable of carrying out the most cruel threat, her expression was as of one devil-possessed, and her features distorted with evil passion. Reasoning with her was useless, for, turning her wrath upon us, she shouted at us in blasphemous language.

The poor old woman, who had crept close to us, said, "Sister, I did not know worshipping

God could mean this—my head is now all pain.”

“Listen,” we whispered, “Jesus knows, He will help, only trust Him, afterwards great joy.”

The daughter-in-law becoming more violent, we had to leave, but not until we noticed a shade of brightness pass across the face of the one who had been truly “chosen in the furnace of affliction.”

We have never seen her since. After that day she was kept closely guarded in the back part of the house, and in visiting the village some months later, we heard that she had died, and could only hope it was true.

“Safely, safely gathered in,
Far from sorrow, far from sin,
Passed beyond all grief and pain,
Death for thee is truest gain.”

Among our many visitors there was one man who from the first seemed anxious to understand the doctrine. He came to us and said, “Convince me that in worshipping your God, I shall not be dishonouring my ancestors.” And this Gaing-Seng did so effectually that he at once invited us to help him to destroy his idols.

We asked him to wait a day or two, and then, if still in earnest, to come and bring us to his house, which was some little distance away.

“Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word.” Oh, the comfort of these words, when, having pointed an awakened soul to its Saviour, our power is at an end! But He, Who is “able to save . . . ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

During the waiting time, he was continually with us, and we urged upon him the necessity of a changed life, to be lived in a strength not his own.

He seemed to be in earnest. "I know you are teaching us to worship the true God," he said, "I must be a worshipping-God man." And when we arrived at his house one morning, there were no signs of indecision upon his face, and no fear, he simply prayed for help, and then collected all his idols and burnt them, even breaking in small pieces the presses in which some of them had been kept.

His wife looked on in silent opposition, making no response to our advances.

"No wonder," said Gaing-Seng, as we returned, "no wonder the devil tried so hard to keep us away."

Two other men had also become thoroughly convinced. "We are going to worship God," they told us, "for we know He is the only One true God"; but they shrank from the consequences which would follow the making of their decision known.

Christmas week was beginning, and day after day went by, and although they came to learn, there was always some excuse given as to why an open confession must be delayed.

But on Christmas morning, just as we had finished our breakfast, which consisted of red rice, eggs, and turnips, one of them arrived, saying, "Sisters, come now, come quickly, my relations are quiet, help me to destroy the idols."

We went at once and without any assistance from us, or open opposition from the members of his household, he burnt everything in which he had formerly trusted.

And then we met for our Christmas service, in the house of the man who had been the first to confess his faith in God. It was a joy to see

these new-born souls, joining with the rest of the world in praising the Saviour, Who had been

“ Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.”

Never before had the angels' message of glad tidings seemed so glad or so strangely new. Perhaps we almost need to stand among converts from the black hopelessness of heathenism, and to watch the dawn of a new life finding expression upon their faces, before our hearts can really overflow in praise to the Father God Who “ so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.”

The Christmas dinner they gave me that day is worthy of description.

It was the fruit of my own words, for when our host had asked me “ If in my country I had often eaten field worms ? ” I had laughingly answered, “ No, in my country those very nice things had never been given me.”

He evidently determined to make up for past neglect, for now a large bowlful of “ the very nice things ” was placed before me. And no one, not even Gaing-Seng, was permitted to come to my rescue.

“ Let me give one to the child,” I pleaded, dangling a particularly large one between the points of my chop-sticks, before the little one's mouth already open to receive it. But no, it and several others had to find their way into my own. “ For,” explained my host, “ we often eat them, but Diàn-sister was not given them in her country ; to-day is a feast day, she must have them all.”

But in spite of this somewhat trying hospitality, I doubt if there were happier people in the world than we two, in our dirty, uncomfortable inn-room on that Christmas night.

A very real difficulty had now to be dealt with. Both these men, and two others, who were also thoroughly convinced of the truth, had been eating opium more or less heavily for years ; and the effects of the drug are such, that no one taking it, can be called a Christian.

We were anxious they should go to the hospital at Kien-Ning, and there undergo a special course of treatment by which a cure can be effected. The suggestion met with their approval, for already, and without help, they were trying to break away from a habit so strong, enslaving, and cruel, that its victims are powerless to do more than chafe, and occasionally struggle against it. Just then a native, professing to sell opium cures, arrived in the village, and immediately our men put themselves under his care.

To us, this was a real disappointment ; for we longed that they should have placed themselves under the hospital influence and teaching. But now, strong in the strength of their own determination, and believing in the efficacy of a heathen doctor's quack medicines, they scarcely understood us, as we again and again urged upon them the necessity of a simple and absolute trust in the keeping power of the God they had so lately learned to worship, and Who alone can snap the chains of those who are in bondage to this sin and its consequent disease.

A few days later, we left them, miserably ill from the effects of the cure, without any human helper to stand beside them in their battle against seen and unseen foes, two days' walk from the nearest place of worship, and only one of the number able to read.

Oh ! How we sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for such as these.

We wanted to stay longer, but felt it was right to leave, as our by no means inexhaustible supply of strength had lessened considerably during these six weeks of itineration, in which rest and quietness were impossible to obtain.

Upon our last morning, we were sitting upon the flat part of the roof, waiting for the chair-coolies to arrive, when a young man, well known to us and much prayed for, came up, and said, "Sisters, my father was a gambler, my brother is a gambler, I am a gambler, it is our profession. I know you are preaching the true doctrine, but a worshipping-God person cannot gamble. I have no other way by which to earn a livelihood, what am I to do?"

God's Holy Spirit was pleading with him, as he stood in the valley of indecision.

We tried to point him from the broad road to the narrow way "which leadeth unto life," and he suddenly exclaimed, "It is so, it is so, all my life long people have forced me down, down the broad road to destruction, but never until you came did anyone even once ask me to walk the up-road to Heaven."

His words give another picture of heathen China, with its millions of human beings drifting helplessly down with the current of the great sin-river, and dashing one another blindly against rocks of misery and despair.

"Oh! strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm on the Rock, and strong in Thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea."

Returning to our headquarters' house, after an itineration, is always like a home coming. The Christians collect at once, with loving welcomes, and anxious to know all that God has been

doing in other places. The servants as quickly prepare a plentiful supply of hot water, knowing instinctively that their mistress will gladly accept it as a needful luxury ; while fellow-missionaries spare no trouble, in providing every available comfort. But we must wait until native excitement has passed away before we can enjoy once more the pleasure and rest of a quiet English talk.

After our arrival at Ciong-Bau, it was so good to look back upon the literal way in which that promise, given to me the first day of travelling, had been fulfilled. The Lord having so manifestly " gone before " us, meeting all difficulties, and preparing for us in the different places.

Miss Bryer was now superintending the adapting of our former house into a building suitable for a girls' boarding-school, to be in readiness to receive the children of Christian parents after the Chinese New Year, February 1899.

That the sisters would open one had been the subject of many prayers for some years ; but, until Miss Bryer returned from furlough, there had been no one able to meet this most pressing need of the district.

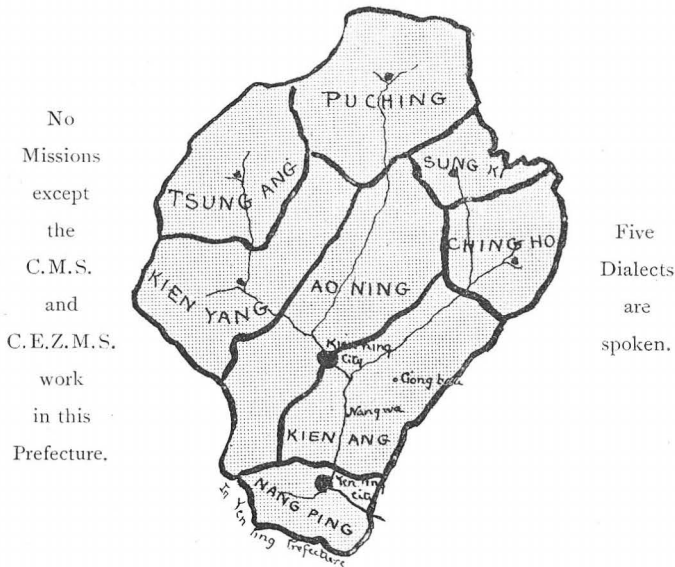
Having spent a few weeks at Ciong-Bau, I went to our women's hospital, close to Kien-Ning city, where, when not itinerating, I have since lived.

It had just completed the first year of its existence, during which time eighty-one patients had been under treatment ; several of whom are now faithfully witnessing for Christ in their own homes.

God was blessing the work, not only in both the hospitals,* but also in its other branches.

* C.M.S. and C.E.Z.M.S

The year 1898 had been one of peaceful growth in the Kien-Ning Church. Services were being regularly held and well attended, in the once opposed cities of Kien-Ning and Kien-Yang (thirty miles further north), and in several outlying villages; and a school for boys had been opened at Nang-Wa, under the supervision of the Reverend W. C. White.



MAP OF THE KIEN-NING PREFECTURE.

The number of missionaries had also increased. Mrs. Phillips, Miss Sears, and Miss Coleston having arrived shortly before Christmas. Mercifully ignorant of future events, and praising God for past blessings, we hopefully entered upon the happy labours of another year, divided in the following manner between our four head-quarter stations.

KIEN-NING CITY and HOSPITALS for men and women : Dr. Rigg, Dr. Pakenham, Miss Johnson, Miss Gardner, and myself.

NANG-WA : The Rev. W. C. White, Mrs. White, and Miss Coleston.

CIONG-BAU : Miss Rodd and Miss Bryer.

KIEN-YANG CITY : The Rev. H. S. Phillips, Mrs. Phillips, and Miss Sears.

“And the children of Israel were numbered and were all present, and went against them, and . . . pitched before them like two little flocks of kids ; but the Syrians filled the country.” (1 Kings xx., 27.)

Our Kien-Ning Prefecture is about the size of Wales, and contains seven provinces, each larger than average English counties, in which five distinct dialects are spoken. There are six walled cities, and thousands of villages, inhabited by multitudes of people, blindly following in the ranks of an army led by the enemy of God.

“And they shall fight against thee ; but they shall not prevail against thee ; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.” (Jeremiah i., 19.)

CHAPTER IX.

SHADOWS STEAL ACROSS THE SKY.

“Lift up thy face unto God . . . and the light shall shine upon thy ways.”—*Job, xxii., 26-28.*

THE great mass of the Chinese people live industrious, plodding, monotonous lives. Month after month passes by and they work on, in a ceaseless round, unbroken by any Sabbath day's rest.

Towards the end of the year their labours increase, through their intense anxiety that everything shall be finished, debts paid, promises fulfilled, and all preparations completed, before the dawn of the New Year, for then the land of China is at rest, and its people keep holiday.

Feasts, gay clothing, the interchange of presents and visits, brighter faces, apparent light-heartedness and freedom from care, prevail for a season, and then once again the stern duties of everyday life are quietly resumed.

The New Year is a time at which countless offerings and sacrifices are presented to the spirits, and ceremonies in their honour are performed, for it is in their power to give prosperity or poverty through the coming months. There must be no carelessness connected with anything done for the first time in the New Year, even in the drawing of water, incense must be burned to the river spirit, lest he should afterwards allow the supply to fail, and before eating any food, an offering must be made to the new kitchen god for the same reason. The spirit of the former one has returned to Heaven on New Year's Eve, and has there

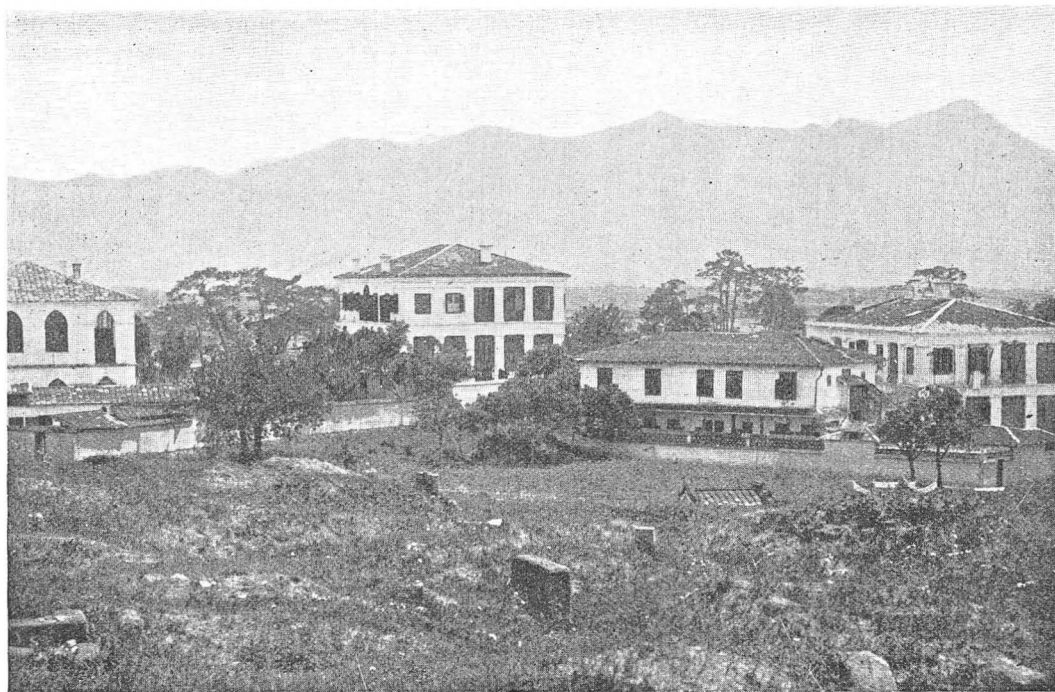
reported upon the behaviour of the family in whose house he has spent the past twelve moons. A custom, which may be peculiar to Kien-Ning city struck us strangely, as we walked through the almost deserted streets that New Year time, and saw the outside of every door splashed with blood, while the people remained and feasted inside their houses.

As far as we could find out, the blood was only to shew that an animal had been sacrificed to some being who, seeing this outward sign, would remember to provide sufficient meat for the future, and we afterwards heard that a special, though common plant is purposely grown and used in a ceremony connected with the putting of this blood upon the doors.

This is just one of many observances, now shadowy, and corrupt in form, which go far towards proving, that in the ages of long ago, the teaching given by God to His own people was not unknown to the Chinese.

As missionary work cannot be actively carried on during such seasons of festivity, we sometimes take the opportunity to leave our districts, and go for a thorough rest and change.

This year Miss Johnson and I decided to spend some weeks in visiting the various mission stations throughout the Province. So one morning we started from Kien-Ning in a small native rat-boat, which brought us to Foo-Chow in three days, where we received from Miss Stevens her never-failing welcome to "The Olives." Having been up-country for over a year, we thoroughly appreciated the joy of meeting our friends again, and the accounts they gave of work in the city, schools, hospital and surrounding villages, were most encouraging.



THE OLIVES, FOO-CHOW.

A short visit to Foo-Chow is decidedly overwhelming. Interviews with the tailor, curio vendor, dentist and, probably, the photographer, are arranged without delay; while the intervals are filled in with shopping and sending parcels home. It means quite a little whirl of excitement, which, for us, only subsided when we found ourselves in a house-boat on the way southwards to the Hing-Hwa Prefecture. A night spent on board, followed by a chair journey of a day and a half, principally through the district of Hok-Chiang, brought us to Dang-Seng, where Miss Tabberer, Miss Reid,* and Miss Dopping Hepenstal were working and rejoicing in the blessing given in a girls' school only lately opened, and in the numbers of patients daily coming to the dispensary for treatment. From Dang-Seng, we went to Hing-Hwa city, travelling for some hours along stone-paved pathways, winding through flat, cultivated, wind-swept plains, here and there intersected by canals, the sea glimmering on the horizon, and bare rugged hills rising sharply from the level stretches.

Hing-Hwa city, in which we spent a few very pleasant days, through Dr. and Mrs. van Someren Taylor's hospitality, is very beautiful. Viewed from its wall, which is in splendid condition and makes a delightful walk, it resembles a vast undulating orchard, with the peaked red roofs of houses appearing through the trees.

There was much of interest in connection with the work, especially the medical branch, to which the wide-spread knowledge of Christianity in Hing-Hwa is mainly due. The well-worked hospitals are large, and are greatly appreciated

*Now Mrs. Genähr, Lutheran Mission, Canton

by the natives, who are not so superstitious and prejudiced as in other parts of the Fuh-Kien Province.

Then we visited Miss Witherby, Miss Vulliamy, and Miss Montfort at Sieng-Iu, the third station in Hing-Hwa, only one day's journey from the city, but lying in far prettier and more mountainous scenery. There we saw the school for Christian women, in which they were not only learning to know their Saviour, but also to read His Word. We saw something of the work of the native pastor too—a holy man of God named Deng, whose life is entirely spent in seeking to win souls for the Master he so faithfully serves.

And so our happy three-fold visit to Hing-Hwa passed, and we travelled back to Foo-Chow, where we rested a day or two, and then started north-wards, spending the first night at Deng-doi, a C.M.S. station worked by four ladies from Australia.

We were particularly interested in a little school for blind boys, lately opened by Miss Oxley, who, by means of the Braille system, is most successfully teaching them to read and write.

Then, continuing our journey for two days, we arrived at Lo-Nguong City, where we were not only welcomed by Miss Wedderspoon and Miss Clayton,* but also by Miss Jackson, Dr. Florence Cooper, and Miss Blanche Cooper, who had come in from Uong-Buang, in order to attend a conference of native workers. We should like to have seen the leper settlement, Church, and home for untainted children, but, having arranged only to spend one night at Lo-Nguong, we just

* Now Mrs. G. A. Bunbury, C.M.S., Hong Kong.

visited the girls' school, and the site for a hospital for women about to be built.

A walk of ten miles, memorable because it included the climbing of a mountain under a blazing sun, straight up hot stone steps for nearly three hours, brought us to the bay which must be crossed in order to reach Fuh-Ning—the Prefecture allocated to the Dublin University Fuh-Kien Mission.

But the sea had no terrors for us that night as, comfortably sleeping our tiredness away, we lay, rolled up in rugs, on the floor of a flat-bottomed boat. We awakened next morning within sight of the shore, ready for the chair-ride which brought us to Fuh-Ning city towards evening. We greatly appreciated the delightful welcome to the ladies' house given us by Miss Clarke, Miss Thomas, Miss Clemson,* and Miss Greer.

Here a Sunday intervened, which not only gave us time to see over the large school for girls, the women's school, superintended by Miss Harmar,† and Dr. and Mrs. Synge's hospitals, but also to see the Church, in which morning service was held, filled to overflowing with Chinese, who listened attentively while the Rev. L. H. Star preached in their own tongue of the mighty works of God.

Then, crossing the bay in another direction, we came to Ning-Taik City, where there is a C.M.S. station, in which we spent a night and part of a day with Miss Boileau, Miss J. Clarke, Miss Bibb,‡ and Miss Nicholson.

Not far from their house and girls' school stands the beautiful little Church, known as the

* Now Mrs. T. de C. Studdert, C.M.S., Fuh-Ding.

† Now Mrs. W. S. Pakenham Walsh, C.M.S., Foo-Chow.

‡ Now Mrs. T. C. Goodchild, C.M.S., Hang-Chow.

Ning-Taik Cathedral ; a native clergyman having expended upon it his thought and ingenuity for a period of twenty-five years ; carving carefully selected texts on the woodwork of the chancel-rails, pulpit, reading-desk, font and pillars, in the Chinese character which so lends itself to decorative purposes.

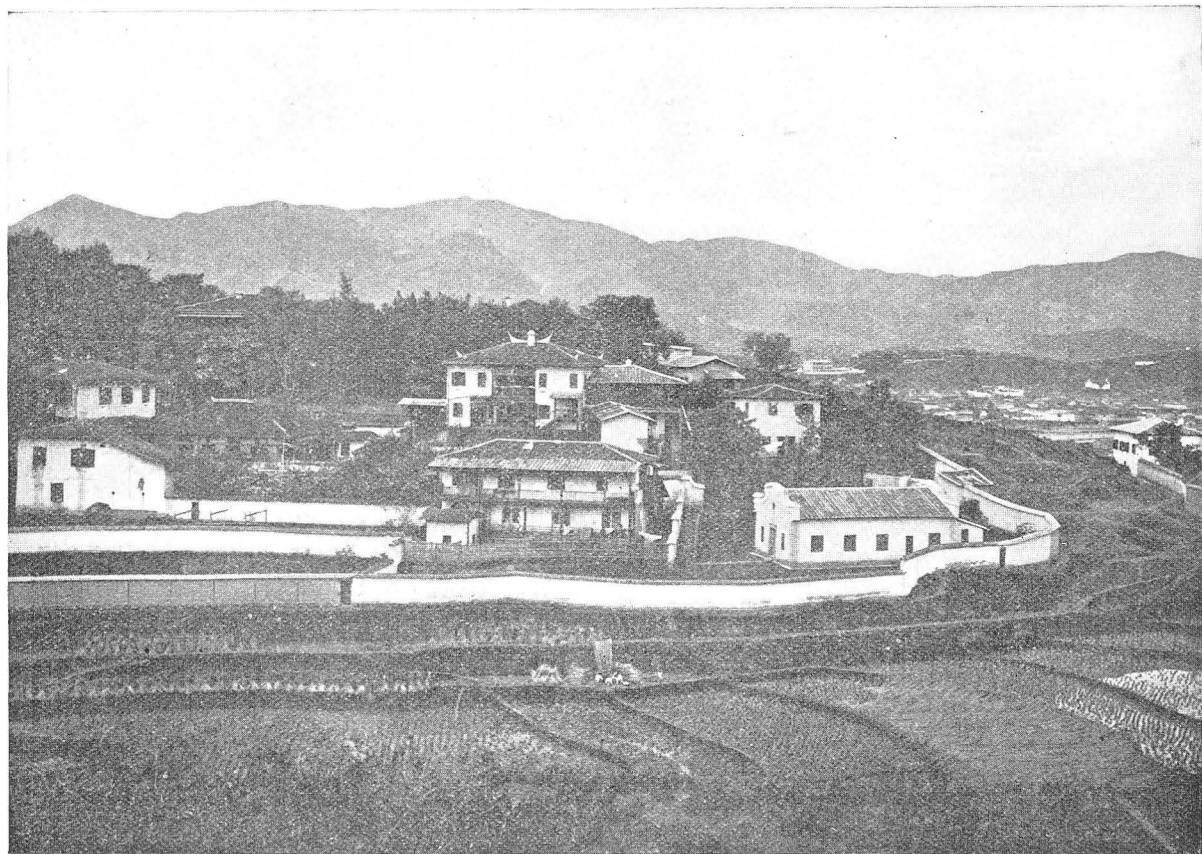
Resuming our journey, nothing could exceed the magnificence of the scenery, through which the road to Sang-Iong, in the Ku-Cheng district, led us for two days, our senses literally feasting upon the wonderful beauty of the luxuriantly wooded mountains and valleys.

It was indeed a privilege to visit Miss Burroughs and Miss M. Newcombe in their native house at Sang-Iong, where they are carrying on a work which has been very richly blessed by our prayer-answering God.

Sa-Iong, the station at which we next arrived and where we spent one night was vacant, Miss Codrington and Miss Locke-King not having returned from a journey to Shang-Hai. And then, one whole day's travelling brought us to the Ku-Cheng "Olives," where we joined a delightfully large party ; Miss Nisbet and her happy little "Birds' Nest" foundlings, Miss Wathen and Miss Leybourn, managing the girls' school with its sixty-six pupils, Miss Baker* and Miss Ouida Jones studying the language, and Miss B. Newcombe preparing to itinerate in an outlying district.

Three days later, we were once more among our Ciong-Bau friends, and rejoicing together over the school so long desired and prayed for, now in full working order. Miss Bryer had opened it

* Now Mrs. T. B. Woods, C.M.S.



THE MISSION COMPOUND AT KU-CHENG.

the week before, with twenty-eight girls, and it was good to see them under her care, not only learning to read the Bible, but also having many of the lessons contained therein, imprinted on their hearts.

Our exceedingly pleasant holiday being over, we settled down in the Kien-Ning hospital, very thankful to have had an opportunity of visiting the various mission stations in the Fuh-Kien Province and of seeing something of what God was doing through and for His servants.

But during the six weeks we had spent in going from one spot of light to another, travelling between each through villages utterly unreachd, cities hardly occupied, large districts still lying in darkness, the great, great need for more workers had been borne in heavily upon our hearts.

Oh why are we not afraid to keep the knowledge of the Saviour from souls He died to save? How is it we so slowly obey that last command when such words as those spoken by the Apostle John must ring continually in our ears—"Little children, it is the last hour"? For now

"The work that centuries might have done
Must crowd the hour of setting sun,
And through all lands the saving Name
Ye must in fervent haste proclaim.

"The fields are white to harvest, weep,
Oh, tardy workers, as ye reap,
For wasted hours that might have won
Rich harvests ere the set of sun.

"We hear His footsteps on the way!
O work while it is called to-day,
Constrained by love, endued with power,
O children, in this last, last hour."

"Behold there ariseth a cloud . . . as small as a man's hand."

I have already alluded to a stormy time of trouble, which broke upon the Kien-Ning Church in the summer of 1899.

It began quite early in the year, and very gently. Dark clouds of superstition, guided in their course by the *litterati* of the cities, gathered slowly but with ever increasing force, and then swept down upon a mass of ignorant credulous people, making them act madly in their blindness and confusion.

We thought but little of the first report which was circulated, for it seemed absurdly childish, and as if so small a cloud must quickly pass away: "The foreigners have imported a quantity of white, very white salt. Whoever eats it must die within a period of three years."

These words, passing from one to another, caused something of a panic.

For weeks little else was spoken of, and we were constantly questioned upon the subject.

The salt commonly used in Kien-Ning is coarse and black, so an enterprising shop-man may have brought some of a finer quality from Foo-Chow, and in this way the report may have been raised. He must, if so, have incurred decided pecuniary loss, and the profits of those who sold salt of the blackest, dirtiest description must have greatly increased.

But we were the chief sufferers, for our motives in the most simple actions were, from this time, looked upon with suspicion.

We soon noticed how reluctantly even the tea, which it was customary to hand to our visitors, was received; few put it to their lips, many refused it altogether—a most unusual proceeding which surprised us until we heard that it was said that, "In the foreigners' tea was something

strange, which made those who drank it uncomfortable until they had accepted Christianity."

Better stay away, they thought, than place themselves in such danger, and so, by degrees, people left off coming to visit us, and we were seldom invited to their houses.

This state of affairs was not improving, when one day, a poor, dying woman arrived at the hospital, alone, and scarcely able to speak.

We received her, perhaps unwisely, but still it would have been hard to refuse admittance to one so weak and ill, simply because she was not accompanied by a relative or friend.

As her end drew near, Miss Johnson sent to the village where her people lived, imploring them to come quickly, but the messenger returned unable to find them.

However, the day following that on which she died, a young woman appeared, claiming to be her daughter.

"My mother! My mother!" she shrieked. "You have murdered her! Truly what people say is true; you are murderers."

We tried to quiet her but it was of no avail. She went, loudly wailing, to the city, where she attracted considerable attention, walking through the streets followed by sympathetic crowds.

Dr. Rigg immediately appealed to the chief City Mandarin, who decided to come and hold an inquest, in order to prove whether the case was one of violence or not.

For hours previous to his arrival, the road between our compound and the city looked like a brightly coloured stream with a continuous line of men in white or blue coats steadily walking out to the scene of action.

As some of them were climbing the steep path

which led to our house, quietly enough, though in a state of suppressed excitement, they were suddenly confronted by one of our patients emerging from the hospital door, a young woman recovering from most dreadful epileptic fits, and scarcely able to walk. Clinging to her aged mother, too excited to speak plainly, and very jealous for our honour, she urged them in shrill tones not to believe the story of our supposed guilt, then, pointing upwards, she tried to tell them something of the great God Who loves us.

It was a touching scene, but soon the attention of all was drawn to the Mandarin, who was approaching in a highly decorated sedan-chair, with out-runners clearing the way, men carrying huge umbrellas and much clashing of cymbals.

Having been received with all due ceremony, a very insignificant-looking little man alighted from the chair. His head and shoulders were covered with a bright red hood to protect him from evil spirits, and scented handkerchiefs were held before his face. Led by attendants to the room in which the dead woman lay, he, in fear and trembling, glanced quickly in and turned away, not pausing again until he reached an open space of ground in front of the men's hospital. There he held the inquest. The poor dead body was laid before him, his officials touched it with certain wands, consulted together, and examined the girl, who, in abject terror, completely denied all her former statements.

“Not murder,” was the verdict they pronounced.

“What punishment,” asked the great man of Dr. Rigg, “shall we then inflict upon this lying woman?”

“None,” was the answer, “we forgive her.”

"She must at least confess her sin," he continued, and ordered a large ink-slab to be covered with a quantity of ink. On this the girl's hand was laid, and then immediately placed upon a sheet of paper, making an inky impress, quite black, except for a small white place untouched by the hollow of the palm; and here her forced confession of wrong-doing was written.

The large number of on-lookers, evidently disappointed that the proceedings ended so peacefully, contented themselves with surging through our houses, and inspecting their contents, but in so inoffensive a manner that they caused us little or no annoyance; and although we were conscious of some ill-feeling on their part, it did not openly find expression.

Meanwhile the Mandarin having taken his leave, had been carried to the *Yamen* in state, where he sat, again wearing the red hood, in the middle of the guest-hall, while several serving-men madly chased and dodged one another around his chair, in order to expel any spirit which might be hovering about him after such close contact with dread, mysterious death.

The effect must have been ludicrous, and we perhaps find it difficult to understand how an educated man could have allowed the action to be performed, but it only gives another proof of how completely all the captives of the evil one are bound with chains of fear; chains, which only He, Who came to preach deliverance, can break, but of Him they know nothing.

This inquest, unfortunately, did not help us in the least, for it was immediately given out that the Mandarin's decision in our favour was entirely due to a large bribe we had given him.

And so the sky grew dark with gathering clouds, while we were powerless to check the adverse winds of current opinion.

Now, open distrust took the place of former friendliness, and we were severely left alone, without visitors, patients, or invitations.

If, when walking through the city or village streets, we suddenly met a group of women or children, it was pitiful to see how they shrank cowering away, white with terror, and often too frightened to move.

Sometimes it was possible to overcome this fear, and then the braver among them would whisper confidentially, "Tell me truly, that woman was indeed murdered by you, was she not?" Or, "Tell us, why did you kill that sick woman?" Occasionally adding, "But see, their faces are not the faces of murderers."

Very soon, this constant refuting of our guilt in the matter and trying to prove our innocence satisfactorily, became wearisome in the extreme.

The Christians, whom, it was commonly said, we employed to carry out our wicked deeds, were our staunch supporters, many of them delighting us by their fearless steadfastness; and at Easter-time when not a few received baptism, they witnessed an open confession in the face of great reproach.

The story of one among them—an old lady in the city of Kien-Yang—is so interesting, that I gladly give it in the words of Mrs. Phillips, who led her to the Saviour.

"In the Kien-Ning Prefecture there is a class of women known as 'those who read the holy books.' They are distinguished from others by a distinctive dress, consisting of a brown untrimmed

jacket and a grey skirt ; they invariably walk with a tall bamboo stick, and each one that I have ever seen wore one or more gold rings. They are also necessarily elderly women, and of very good repute.

“No slander or gossip may defile their lips, for they are given over to the service of Buddha. They are strict vegetarians, and must in every way be careful as to their manner of life. Each of these women is provided with a time-table, that is, a list of idol-temples, and the dates on which certain idols are to be worshipped.

“Her whole time is spent in going from temple to temple, and there repeating prayers. It is no uncommon thing to find twenty or thirty of these women sitting in a temple, busily employed in telling their beads, muttering the name of Buddha or some passage from his works, and, as each ten or hundred prayers is said, putting a red mark in a little circle on a paper, in the centre of which is a picture of Buddha. These prayers will be worth so much money after death, each circle being equivalent to about one hundred cash, *i.e.* twopence halfpenny. When not actually praying, the women are busy making paper representations of all kinds of things, such as spoons, bowls, chop-sticks, fire-places, ropes. We should not recognize any of these articles, but they are supposed to bear some resemblance to the objects named. These are all for use in the spirit world. The twisted paper or rope is to pull the soul away from the devil's clutches, and to bear it safely to the western heavens.

“We have lately come in close contact with old Mrs. Ho, who for the last thirty years has been busily engaged in prayer-chanting. In the

third month of last year she came to our house amongst a crowd of forty or fifty other women—a tidy, clean old lady, seventy-five years old, very small, and well-behaved. I gave her tea, and she stroked my hand, and said, ‘I cannot understand what you say with so many visitors here; may I wait till they are gone, and then you can slowly tell me about your religion?’

“Willingly I asked her to wait, and for five hours that old lady sat eagerly listening to what I was saying, and trying to understand. When the rush of visitors was over, I was able to talk to her alone for some time. She was very much interested, and, I think, was convicted of the truth on that first Sunday.

“Every week she came regularly to Church, and we could tell that a real work was going on in her heart. Then a difficulty arose. She was receiving payment for prayers she was saying for several families, and had been prepaid for the next three months. As this payment had been paid in kind, and not in cash, she did not know what to do. By this time she was convinced of the folly and wrong of idolatry, but she also felt that she was bound to fulfil her service for these people.

“It was a very difficult question for us—this was our first woman convert in Kien-Yang, and we feared to give her money, lest our motive should be misunderstood.

“We continued to pray for the poor old lady, that God would bring her right out of all the bondage of her former life.

“It was with very real joy she came to us in the tenth month and said her prayer-debts were all paid; she told us she hurried over the prayers to get them done quickly, and all the time in her

heart prayed to God. (I thought of 2 Kings v., 18.) It was not long after this that I was alone for a week, and so asked the old lady and her little grand-daughter to come and stay a few days and keep me company. I gave up a good deal of time to teaching her during those days, and it was delightful to hear her prayers, as she went into every little detail of her life. I had heard that Buddhist chanters had special paraphernalia for taking to the temples. When I asked Mrs. Ho about this, she said it was true, and that she had entrusted her own to a friend to keep until her death, when, according to the regular custom, all would be burnt over her coffin. I pointed out to her that now Jesus was her Saviour, He was sufficient ; but did not say much more.

“ We were away from Kien-Yang for about two months in the autumn. Soon after our return, the old lady asked me whether she must still give up all her chanting paraphernalia. I could see that God Himself was convicting her, so said little, except that I knew it would please Jesus. One afternoon she called me downstairs, and to my delight I saw that, of her own accord, she had brought her basket and all it contained.

“ It was a very solemn time for us both ; she was giving up what it had cost her a life-time to make. How easy for me to take them from her, but what must it have meant for her !

“ The old brown fingers trembled, as carefully she took out bundle after bundle of paper prayers marked with the red mark, which is the proof that so many prayers have been said ; packets of chop-sticks, bowls, spoons, all made in paper ; packets of twisted paper, the cords

to draw her soul from hell ; a large paper-made ancestral tablet on which was written her life-history — the date when she was dedicated to the service of Buddha, etc., signed by her sons and herself and by other chanting-women ; two passports, which are to frank her through the evil spirit-world (on these are written the names of several devils and permission to pass through their halls) ; a purse made of calico, containing gold and silver money to be used in Hades ; numbers of shoes of gold and silver, each representing so many dollars ; her rosary with a little image of Buddha, and two silver characters for Buddha and Happiness, and four or five smaller rosaries ; a paper representing a ship surrounded by hundreds of little circles, each representing so many prayers, and therefore so much money (the ship is supposed to bear her through Hades to the happy land beyond) ; and a very pretty pair of white and blue satin shoes (real size) for her to wear after her death.

“ Among the paper things was a large round of card-board, and on it were fastened gold-paper hair ornaments, ear-rings, bracelets, etc. With all these was her idol calendar, telling when and where she must worship certain idols.

“ It was very touching to see the old lady carefully take out these that had been most precious treasures to her. She told me what they were and slowly put them back, and then looked up brightly and said,

“ ‘ Now I have Jesus, that is enough ; I do not want these any more.’

“ Then they were packed up in her peculiar red basket (only used by such women), the wooden box to hold incense was also there, and later on she brought me her brown coat, grey skirt, and even her old black stick and little

wooden box, in which she used to take her rice to the temple. 'I used all these things in the service of Buddha; I must have nothing more to do with them,' she said, as she gave them to me.

"Praise God for His great grace, which not only enabled her to give up these things she had been years and years in collecting, and which were to have been burnt over her coffin, but which gave her much joy in the sacrifice.

"She said two months after, "I must tell you one true sentence. Since the day I gave you all my things (mentioning them), I have been so happy. I went back to my room and knelt down and thanked Jesus, and now I get more happy every day.'

"Again, she said 'Yes, the neighbours say I am better-looking now, and I am, since I served Jesus. I have nothing to worry me, so my cheeks grow fatter.'

"On Easter Sunday our dear old lady was received into Christ's visible Church, and was given a name which means 'obtained the Truth.' She was so bright that day.

"She is too old to be a Bible-woman, but, like Anna, we can say she speaks of Christ to many."*

Not long ago this life, to which light came at evening time, passed peacefully away.

* From *India's Women and China's Daughters*, January, 1900.

CHAPTER X.

CLOUDS COVER THE BLUE.

“And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.”—*Job xxxvii., 21.*

THE superstitious fears of the poor people in the city and its neighbourhood so hindered our work that I, hoping the more outlying parts of the district had not become affected in like manner, decided to take a long itinerating tour, accompanied by Mrs. Eng-Nu, who, being a native of Ciong-Bau, and very loving, tactful, and of quick understanding, would, by her very presence, help to dispel any newly arisen doubts regarding our motives.

We planned to stay, as opportunity offered, in places where the previous Christmas-time had been spent; and then to make our way along an untouched line of road, and to lodge, if possible, in a mountain village known to us by name as the home of some of Mrs. Eng-Nu's relatives, people she had often prayed for and longed to reach.

And so one morning we started, making quite a little procession, with my servant boy and the coolie we had hired to carry our luggage. This consisted of two baskets, which required careful packing as, if they weighed more than eighty or ninety pounds, the load-man would strongly object to carry them on his shoulders; but they must hold every necessary for the whole time, from bedding (the inns only provide boards), down to a few tinned provisions.

Towards evening, we arrived at A-Iong, and went to the inn-woman, who, on listening to her small daughter's entreaties, had only a few months before, decided not to accept Christianity. She received us coldly, and her assembled guests were silent. Fortunately we were bound for Súing-tê, so we did not need night accommodation. "This sister was lately here for more than ten days; you gladly welcomed her then, and why not now?" questioned Mrs. Eng-Nu.

"Alas!" was the answer, "We did not know; she seemed good exceedingly, but passing travellers have told us since of a poor woman murdered at the hospital."

I put both my hands on the inn-woman's shoulders, so that she had to face me, and asked her very gently if, in her "inside heart," she believed me guilty of this crime?

"Sister, do not ask me, do not ask me," she pleaded. "I see your face and say, it is not true, you could not kill anyone; but you go away and people say it is true. Sometimes I believe them, and yet last year you very much loved us."

It was very discouraging, and we left them, wondering if the effects of what people were saying were to trouble us all through our tour. Just then God cheered us in a way I love to remember.

The chairs were on the point of being lifted, when an old woman hobbled forward and whispered, "Diàn-sister, I know you did not commit this sin; I in my heart am trusting Jesus, every day I pray to God."

The few days spent with the Christian family in Súing-tê, were happy ones, and very quiet, as, instead of trying to overcome the disturbed state

of things outside, we devoted our time to teaching the household, and we were glad to do so, for they were shortly to receive baptism, and had many questions to ask.

It was good to see the earnest, simple way they were instructing an old man who was joining with them in worshipping God. He had secretly given up idol-worship months before, and when asked why he delayed so long in making an open confession, he had answered reproachfully, "This doctrine is great; I was slowly slowly thinking, how could I eat it all at once?" This old man has since died.

The people around were more opposed than ever, and were causing the family considerable trouble. Once they attacked the house, and beat the eldest son severely, but his faith only grew the stronger, and, when telling me of many petty persecutions to which they were subjected, he said, "Jesus knows, sad things often happen, but our inside hearts are all peace."

Going on to the next village I came in for a not altogether amusing experience.

We had only gone a few miles when it began to rain in torrents; a little further on we reached a mountain which had to be crossed by climbing a mile and a half of steep stone steps. I could not expect the chair-coolies to carry me, so got out and walked. Overhead the rain streamed through my umbrella, underfoot it poured down the steps in a continuous waterfall, so that, when I reached the top, I was soaked through and through, too tired to walk more, and too wet to get back into the chair for a long ride.

Mrs. Eng-Nu, in real distress, implored me to change my dripping raiment quickly for a suit of hers.

She, being a little woman, not taller than many a child of ten years' old, the very idea was ludicrous ; but, as it seemed the wisest course to take, I agreed, and she forthwith took off her outer suit (easily sparing it, as when Chinese women travel they wear quantities of clothes), into which I changed, with considerable amusement and difficulty, within the narrow limits of my chair, wondering when the feat was accomplished whether it was possible to look less absurd than I felt.

But we were dismayed to arrive at our destination and find no one willing to receive us, owing to the report of that woman's death having preceded us.

We had been invited to stay in the house of a man who had put away his idols during the previous itineration, but as we had been unable to send word of the exact day on which to expect us, he unfortunately happened to be away from home ; while his wife, disliking both us and the doctrine strongly objected to entertain one of the notorious foreign women. However, Mrs. Eng-Nu persuaded her to allow us the use of the loft, which she did grudgingly and of necessity, muttering, " If I turn them away, my husband will beat me."

It was very unpleasant to have to force ourselves upon such an unwilling hostess, but we were obliged to do so, for it was late in the afternoon, still raining, and the inn was so disreputable that lodging there was out of the question.

The loft was extremely dirty, a big pile of loose clay, old straw and jars containing fruits in process of fermentation, covered the floor ; still, thankful for the shelter, we soon managed to make it habitable. Almost in spite of herself

the poor frightened woman became friendly; but, as the people around shewed no inclination to follow her example, we moved on to the next village. The scenery along the road, leading up a great mountain pass, was very beautiful. From one point we looked down into a long valley, which resembled a vast sea of pale green feathery bamboos, bending and swaying in the breeze; ranges of deep-blue mountains were beyond, while beside us, close to the narrow pathway, were sheets of snow-white tree-rhododendrons mingled with shrubs of brilliant red azaleas.

It was wonderful to stand there, realizing that for the first time, through many ages, one of His creatures was rejoicing in, and praising the Creator for this special view of surpassing beauty.

“Something lives in every hue
Christless eyes have never seen.”

To a heathen mind nature holds nothing worthy of admiration, and surely the Father must be grieved to see vast tracts of His loveliest handiwork uncared for by a people to whom He is unknown, and pleased when those who know Him say in heart-felt thanksgiving, “Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work.” (Psalm xcii., 4.)

“Diàn-sister, you have come, you have come, I am glad exceedingly to see you.”

Such was the greeting we received upon entering the gateway of a village, only known to us by name, and one we had approached with decided trepidation, doubtful as to the reception which might await us.

Surprised and relieved, I looked at the speaker. “Do you not remember me?” she questioned. “Last summer, while staying with relatives in Kien-Ning city, one day we paid a visit to the

hospital. You sisters gave us many things to eat, tired yourselves in entertaining us, and spoke words so good to hear, that since my one wish has been to see you in this place. Now you have come, we are very glad."

She led us to the best inn the town afforded. For days it was crowded from morning to night with people who, with unprejudiced minds, came simply and solely to hear our message. They were a respectful, intelligent set, remarkably free from opium-eating, and educated to a fair extent.

Many of the boys and men came each day to study our "holy book" for themselves. The school-master bought a New Testament and some copies of St. Mark's Gospel, and gave them to his pupils as books to read in school.

Three women openly expressed their desire to become Christians, while others were "slowly slowly thinking."

This happy condition of things lasted for about a week, when, one evening, we returned from visiting in a village outside to find a travelling pedlar had brought to the inn worse reports of our evil doings than had ever been circulated before.

"I warn you," he said, "to be careful; these foreigners are wicked exceedingly, always working out their evil designs."

The seeds of distrust thus sown, quickly took root, and grew apace, and Satan, taking full advantage of the change, opposed God's work in every direction.

A heathen festival was organized and held in a temple close to the inn. It drew the people away from us and excited them.

There had been three or four deaths quite lately in the village, which meant that the

spirits were angry, and ought to be appeased ; so a man who had marionettes was called to show them off to the idols, in order to amuse and please them. This entertainment, accompanied by music (?), went on at intervals, both day and night.

Oh, how dark is the understanding of those who know not God ! We now came across an extraordinary instance of its extent. While walking out one afternoon we saw three tables arranged in the village gateway, on which were placed several bowls of fat, greasy pork, and other tasty varieties. About twelve men were standing around, eating the viands with considerable energy. Outside the gate a straw mattress was lying on the ground, on which were drums and other musical instruments. Sitting at the head was a little straw man, about three feet high, his arms outstretched in a gallant if helpless style, his straw pig-tail floating on the breeze.

We asked what the energetic little gentleman was supposed to be doing. "Catching the devil," was the answer they gave us, evidently not doubting his ability to perform the feat. Further on, we passed another figure of the same description, who, should the first happen to let the enemy slip through his straw fingers, was expected to clutch him with a deadly grip.

But suddenly a brilliant idea struck the men who were feasting. Why not make use of the formidable foreign woman to get rid of their foe ? So with one consent they loudly shouted two or three times over, "Devil, follow the foreign woman ; devil, follow the foreign woman."

"Sister, do not mind them," said Mrs. Eng-Nu, taking hold of my hand. "Jesus is with us, the devils fear Him."

The incident only meant that somebody in the village was very ill ; and as the heathen believe sickness is brought by an evil spirit, they spread a feast in the gateway, trusting its odour will attract him from the house, and that, having eaten the good things provided, his anger will be appeased, and he will contentedly take his departure, not suspecting the alarming ambush lying in wait outside to capture and carry him away.

Then trouble came to us by means of a mistake I made, through not remembering the great importance heathen attach to writing. I asked a woman who was beginning to worship God if she would give me her full name with those of the other believers, and wrote them on a card, only that we might know how to pray more definitely for them. She went out, and innocently told what I had done. It upset the whole place, and the rumour spread that the women whose names I had taken were completely in my power ; they would have to follow me wherever I went, and, in the end, would probably be killed in order to make medicine of their bodies.

The son of one of these women believing this to be true, came late one evening to the inn, in a towering passion, flourishing a torch in his hand, and shouting out several times that, if I made his mother follow me, he would give me "a knife to eat," which was a polite way of threatening to cut my throat.

Several of the bystanders fortunately came to the rescue, saying, "We always hear her telling people to worship God in their own houses ; this is a very no-manners boy." But the "no-manners boy," not listening to reason, continued shouting "Will give you a knife to eat," until he was

taken by the shoulders and put out into the street.

Other influences then must have prevailed, for the next day, to my surprise and amusement, he walked quietly in at supper-time, stood silent for a few moments, and then remarked upon the brilliance of the light given by my stable-lantern, after which he proceeded to ask for medicine.

This proved too much for our gravity, and we laughed outright, whereupon he exclaimed, "It was nothing; yesterday, believing this thing, I was angry; to-day, knowing it is false, I am satisfied."

And so this little episode ended more peacefully than we at first expected.

Still, there were difficulties of other kinds, and some who had almost decided to become Christians, kept away, though a very few held bravely on, happy in spite of constant trouble which they bore, for "His Name's sake," with hearts "all peace."

Owing to the unpleasant condition of things, we now thought it advisable to return to the hospital, instead of continuing the tour, which had at first been planned.

But even our arrangements to leave were hindered by a very ridiculous notion.

The chair-coolies were all unwilling to carry me, because they believed I had gone in the darkness of night-time to the neighbouring hills, where, with the help of my wonderful, earth-seeing eyes, I had found and taken away large quantities of gold, silver and precious stones. These being fastened around my body, of necessity made me enormously heavy, so that no ordinary men could be expected to carry me seventeen long miles over the mountains to Ciong-Bau, our nearest station.

We asked them to weigh me before finally declining, but only one man appeared to fulfil this request, and he was not brave enough to make the attempt.

So, with my servant boy, I set out walking, up and over mountains, along slippery narrow paths, sometimes deep with mud, or flooded with ponds and little rivers of water, for there had been heavy rains upon the previous days.

But the climax came when we arrived at Ciong-Bau, where the river which must be crossed in order to reach our house, was so swollen that the existing bridge was almost useless.

Being, however, far too wet already to mind any further amount of water, we held hands, plunged in, and struggled across. On gaining the other side we were received by Miss Rodd, Miss Bryer, twenty-nine school-girls and most of the village Christians, who, when their anxiety as to our safety was relieved, indulged in shrieks of laughter at the watery plight in which "Diàn-sister" had come home to them.

"And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind."

That very evening news was brought to Ciong-Bau, which filled the hearts of many with consternation.

"On a hill close to one of the city gates, the dead body of a little boy has been discovered, murdered, it is supposed, by the foreigners or by 'eating-foreign-doctrine people' in their employment. When this is proved, no mercy will be shown to the perpetrators of so black a crime."

Such was the announcement delivered again and again, with various additions as to how the city people, mad with rage, were gathering together

in thousands, threatening to turn out the foreigners and pull down their buildings.

The Christians quickly collecting, we all met in Mrs. Eng-Nu's house for a prayer-meeting. The situation was serious, and we knew ourselves to be helpless and few, compared with the multitude breathing out slaughter against us, but we also knew that the Lord is mindful of His own, and, as the Súing-tê family said in their time of trial, He is "very very trustworthy."

"Our great Saviour," some one prayed, "Thy disciple Peter, one man alone in prison, with chains chained, with soldiers guarded, with no means of escape, very powerless. His friends outside with very hot hearts were praying for him. This prayer was heard; therefore the king's command, the prison doors, the soldiers, the heavy chains, all no use. Thine angel came, set Peter free; he quickly, quickly walked to the house of prayer, there many people thanked Thee. To-day, we Thy disciples, very few, very helpless, are in great danger. The devil is strong, his plans clever exceedingly, Thou art stronger, Thy power the greatest, Thou canst save. Help us every second to remember Thee, to trust Thee. We know this prayer is now heard by Thee. Our hearts all have peace." How good so to

". . . kneel and cast our load,
E'en while we pray, upon our God."

Very early the following morning I left Ciong-Bau, hoping to reach the hospital before the impending outbreak took place.

All along the road we heard little else beside our supposed crimes spoken of by passers-by, in a manner far from reassuring. One account gave us to understand that both foreigners and native Christians had fled by boat from Kien-Ning to

Nang-Wa, leaving the city in an uproar, and our buildings on the point of being attacked. However, knowing this statement to be untrue, we passed on. My coolies behaved splendidly, closely covering the chair-front with their dirty blue cloths, and warning me to carefully keep my "big feet" hidden. Then carrying me around the walls instead of through the city, they cleared a pathway for themselves at the gateways we passed by shouting "A visitor, a visitor," instead of the more usual "A foreigner, a foreigner;" the people quietly moving aside to allow the shabby-looking chair to go by, containing, as they supposed, a native woman going to visit her friends; and so I was safely brought to the hospital. It was an arrival full of rest and praise, for Miss Johnson met me saying how wonderfully the wrath of man had been restrained, and that now there was no reason to expect an immediate attack. The rioters, having been drawn principally from the lower classes, and without leader or proper organization, surged through the streets for the greater part of two days, but, delaying action for so long, the heat of their excitement had evaporated.

Still the atmosphere grew hot and sullen with ill-feeling, which found expression in rumours of such murders as could only be attributed to foreigners or Christians, and in the posting of blasphemous placards on one of which our Lord was called "The King of devils."

Very refreshing were the gleams of brightness which came as God's messengers of love to cheer us.

One was in the person of a poor old woman from Nang-Wa, whose devotion to Miss Johnson has always been most touching. Now when we were feared, suspected, and treated as dangerous criminals, she arrived one evening at

the hospital, bringing everything she possessed, and announced her intention of spending the rest of her days "with my very much loved sister."

It was about a fortnight after the first attempted riot, that a report more absurd than any of those previously circulated, caused the already over-charged clouds to break into the terrific storm which drove us from our district.

"Two eyes," it was said, "have been found upon a piece of black foreign cloth, belonging to the body of a missing sailor, murdered in order to obtain them for medicinal purposes." The dead body must be buried close by, they thought, so hundreds of men quickly rushed to the river side, the place of the supposed discovery, in order to look for a newly dug grave.

While they were so engaged, Dr. Rigg, who had been for some time in Foo-Chow, returned, and at once realizing the gravity of the situation, decided that we should all leave Kien-Ning for a while, and this we arranged to do quietly, and in small parties, during the following week, hoping that by our absenting ourselves, the Christians, who are so identified with us, might be in a safer position.

The crowds, returning from the river side, where they had found neither body nor grave, were greeted with the news of an attempt to murder a child in a village close to Ciong-Bau, and altogether intense excitement prevailed.

The next afternoon, just as we had met together for a prayer-meeting, word came that a riot could no longer be restrained as the whole city had risen, shops were shut, and mandarins were powerless to arrest the torrents of vengeance about to fall upon the foreigners, the Ku-Cheng workers, and the native Christians.

There was no time to be lost. Our servants at the risk of their lives made three attempts to procure boats for the necessary flight, the last only being successful.

In the meantime messages were despatched both to Mr. Phillips in Kien-Yang, and to Miss Rodd and Miss Bryer in Ciong-Bau.

Shortly after day-light, we three ladies and several native women started down the river in four boats, and that evening arrived safely in Yen-Ping city, where there is a hospital superintended by a former student of Dr. Rigg's.

The Kien-Ning boats would go no further, so here we spent the night and part of the following day, while waiting to continue our journey in a great tea-barge leaving about mid-day, whose owner was willing, for a considerable sum of money, to accommodate any number of passengers.

All through that morning we stood welcoming the fugitive Christians who arrived at intervals.

Oh the accounts they brought! The reported murder of Mr. and Mrs. Phillips and Miss Sears, while escaping from Kien-Yang. The cruel attack made upon the Christians in the leper settlement. The flames they had seen "reaching to the sky" of the new city Church now burnt to the ground, and many other stories, some true, some entirely false, others exaggerated, but then we believed them all, and it seemed as if Satan had gained a complete victory, and our hearts ached sorely for the Christians in Ciong-Bau and the other outlying villages.

Many of the escapes were very wonderful. "God brought us here, we hardly know how," some said as they spoke of being unconscious of fear, "with hearts all peace."

Then we heard that Dr. Rigg, Dr. Pakenham, and the native doctors and students, had been forced to leave shortly after our departure, and had already reached Nang-Wa.

Later on in the morning a boat came in containing among other refugees the wife of a catechist, who, it had just been discovered, had contracted the awful disease of leprosy. She, never a satisfactory Christian, now far from strong and troubled about her husband's illness, arrived with two small children in an utterly unnerved condition. The horrors spoken of before were as nothing to those of which we now heard. "To-morrow," she cried, "no worshipping-God person will be alive, the devil's men are murdering them all."

She stood below the hospital steps, surrounded by Christians who, until her arrival, had not ceased to praise God for the way in which He had delivered them from violence. Now something of a panic was created, and the former expressions of "Thank God, thank Jesus," were changed into the sad and very usual utterance of "Alas! Alas!"

For a moment questioning doubt prevailed, and then Ngiong-Gi Sing-Saing, the hospital doctor, standing in the door-way above, and lifting his hands as if to ask for silence, speaking very gently, with an intensity of feeling evident in the quietness of his voice, said, "Listen awhile! Long ago, there was a great storm on the Sea of Galilee. Out far from dry ground our Jesus and His disciples were sitting in a little boat. A great wind beat on them. A great water entered the boat. It was all danger. But Jesus quietly, quietly lay asleep, all peace.

"The disciples looked at the great wind, they looked at the great water, they very much feared;

they cried out, they called Jesus to awake, they thought He did not know, did not care. Then Jesus slowly, slowly stood up, looked at the wind, looked at the water, and said, 'Peace be still,' there was then no wind, there was a great calm.



NGIONG-GI SING-SAING.

“To-day our Kien-Ning Church is like that boat, in great danger, but our Jesus is with us. He is not asleep. He is carefully watching us. He knows all. Therefore we must not fear, must not doubt. He now, this minute, says to each one of us, ‘Peace be still.’”

Ngiong-Gi Sing-Saing, having given us his beautiful message, ceased speaking, while upon

the heart of each one who had received his words a great calm had fallen.

“ In the hollow of His hand,
 ’Mid rough seas,
 In the hollow of His hand
 Troubles cease ;
 That Omnipotence so grand,
 Which can Heaven and earth command,
 Makes His children understand
 Perfect peace.”

Before we left Yen-Ping, Miss Rodd and Miss Bryer joined us. Within a few hours they had dismissed the girls’ school, arranged as far as possible for the natives, and, starting from Ciong-Bau at evening time, had arrived after midnight at Nang-Wa, having accomplished a difficult walk of twelve miles on narrow pathways, in darkness and torrents of rain.

The remainder of the journey to Foo-Chow was comparatively easy. As we went quickly down the river, leaving so many of our native Christians, humanly speaking alone, to face persecution and danger, Miss Johnson gave us a verse which greatly helped us to leave them restfully in our Father’s care “ For thus saith the Lord of Hosts ; . . . he that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.”

“ Peace, perfect peace ! with loved ones far away !
 In Jesus’ keeping we are safe, and they.”

Oh ! So safe when overshadowed by a love greater than the greatest any human being can lavish upon another, for the lesser love would shield its object from pain, while the greater can allow it to suffer.

There was thanksgiving in Foo-Chow when we had all safely arrived from the various up-country stations, and the truest joy when word came from Kien-Ning contradicting the reported

murder of Mr. and Mrs. Phillips and Miss Sears and recounting how well the Mandarin had protected them in the Kien-Yang *Yamen*. And, when a few days later, they reached Foo-Chow they brought with them a correct account of all that had taken place during the riot :—the burning to the ground of the lately opened Church in Kien-Ning city, with the murder of an old Christian man found kneeling inside it ; the attack made upon the leper settlement ; the ill-treating of the leper Catechist and the destruction of the lepers' little Church. These, with other acts of violence, threatenings and slaughter breathed out by an excited angry mob against all " worshipping-God people," made us realize most clearly that all our lives had been spared only because of the strong hand of our God stretched out to save us.

" If the Lord Himself had not been on our side, when men rose up against us :

" They had swallowed us up quick when they were so wrathfully displeased at us . . .

" But praised be the Lord : Who hath not given us over for a prey unto their teeth.

" Our soul is escaped even as a bird out of the snare of the fowler : the snare is broken, and we are delivered.

" Our help standeth in the Name of the Lord : Who hath made Heaven and earth." (Psalm cxxiv., 1, 2, 5, 6, 7. P.B. version.)

CHAPTER XI.

HE MAKETH THE STORM TO CEASE.

“He led them . . . all the night with a light.”—*Psalm lxxviii., 14.*



VERY large party of missionaries assembled that summer upon the Ku-Liang mountains; as, on account of our north-west riot, no one was allowed to remain in the up-country stations. News from Kien-Ning reached us at intervals, which at first was so far from re-assuring that many thought we would be unable to return there for months or even years to come.

The following letter* written home by Miss Bryer gives a clear account of how matters stood at this time:—

“I am thankful to say that nothing further has occurred in the way of destruction of life or property, though the outlook is still threatening as far as the enemy is concerned; but our eyes are not upon him, but upon the Captain of the Lord’s Host, with Whom victory is certain.

“After we missionaries had all left the Kien-Ning district, the *literati* posted up placards all over Kien-Ning city stating their intentions, which were as follows:—

“I. Should soldiers be sent up against them, they would at once proceed to pull down all mission buildings.

“II. Should the Mandarins investigate into the cause of the riot, they would first of all escort the Mandarins out of the city, and then kill every Christian in the district.

“III. In case the foreigners returned, they would kill them all, as their determination was to pull up Christianity by the roots.

* *India’s Women and China’s Daughters*, November, 1899.

“ How little these poor blind men realize that it is a vain thing to fight against God and against His Church, for the gates of hell shall not prevail against it !

“ Such are their threatenings ! We laid them, as Hezekiah did his letter, before the Lord, and as yet they are only threatenings, as far as these three points go. In the meantime, however, a perfect reign of terror is prevailing over the whole district ; every stranger who enters or passes through a village is searched, and if money or knives are found on him, he is severely beaten. Seven men have already died as the result.

“ Lawlessness prevails. There is no king . . . and every man does that which is right in his own eyes.

“ The Mandarins are intimidated, and dare not assert their authority ; moreover, they are unwilling to do so on our behalf. One of our Chinese teachers has turned traitor, which has done great harm. Most of them, when interrogated about the foreigners, refused to say either good or bad, but this man, in abject terror, and wishing to curry favour with the literary men, answered, ‘ The foreigners are very good outwardly, but I have lived in their houses, and they are very bad.’ This answer, of course, is in everyone’s mouth, and I daresay it is believed.

“ A memorial has been sent home to the C.M.S. asking that an appeal should be made to the British Government on behalf of missionary work in this province. The lines of action it proposes are as follows :—

“ I. That all evil rumours and vile placards shall be considered of importance and rigorously dealt with.

“ II. That all murderers and ringleaders in attack shall be severely punished, seeing that mercy to such is clearly an

evidence of weakness in rulers, and certain to lead to further trouble and crime.

“ III. That officials, and especially prefects and higher officials, guilty of negligence, shall be punished whenever possible.

“ IV. That the rights of native Christians shall be insisted upon, and true religious liberty obtained for them.

“ V. That in all cases compensation for actual losses shall be given, and all buildings destroyed shall be rebuilt by the authorities.

“ We feel that mistakes have been made in the past by condoning offences, when not a single individual was punished for attacks on person or property. The Chinese cannot understand the principle that actuates us, and look upon it as a sign of weakness, and become emboldened to do worse. They are like children, and have to be treated as such.

“ Most of our workers amongst the natives have had to leave Kien-Ning district, as they are Ku-Cheng men, and are looked upon as outsiders, so our Christians are left to face the persecution alone, and most of them, praise God, are remaining steadfast. I have had nice letters from some of my girls, asking how we are, and praying that our return may be speedy. We are having daily prayer-meetings up here, from 8-30 to 9 a.m., and God is pouring out the spirit of prayer, and making us of one heart and one soul in this matter.

“ We are praising Him for victory beforehand, for we know He is a God ‘ Which worketh for him that waiteth for Him,’ and they that wait on Him shall never be ashamed.

“ Our return at present seems very uncertain. Mr. Phillips, Dr. Rigg, and Mr. White may possibly go up in September, after the great heat is over, and, if the district is quiet, we may be allowed to return after the Foo-Chow Conference about the end of November. You know how we long to be

back in the thick of the fight again, but we are absolutely at His disposal to wait His time, and He has work for us to do down here. I am thankful to say our teachers have consented to come down, so I hope to prepare Genesis and perhaps Exodus, in the Romanized colloquial for print.

“ Do pray very earnestly for the Kien-Ning district, that God’s power may be manifested there as in the times of old. ‘The captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee.’ Oh that the Stronger than the strong and the Mightier than the mighty may enter into the strong man’s house and spoil his goods ! ”

Letters written to us by the Christians were our joy during this waiting time : one in particular told that though the Church had been destroyed, and the lives of all worshippers were in danger, they had quietly met from the very first Sunday for regular service in the city itself, using for the purpose the house bought for work amongst women as a memorial to the Rev. J. S. Collins. Also, that in each of our village centres, Ciong-Bau, Nang-Wa, etc., these open Church services had never once been omitted, even in places where the Catechists, being Ku-Cheng men, had returned to their own county. The Christian men among these unshepherded congregations had come to the rescue and had taken it in turns to act as leaders.

The chief excitement at Ku-Liang this summer was a terrible typhoon which took place on the fifth and sixth of August, and shewed us once more how in China it is well to be ready for the unexpected. A day before the event almost every Fuh-Kien missionary, several from Amoy

and a few from Shang-Hai were comfortably settled in little houses on the Ku-Liang mountains, enjoying rest, coolness and much pleasant intercourse.

Then a sudden interruption came, which, in three days, changed the scene to one of desolation. Houses were left in every stage of dilapidation, some completely ruined others with roofs off, walls down, verandahs and wood-work—where?—ask of “the winds that far away with fragments strewed the hills.”

It was caused by the typhoon already mentioned, compared with which our greatest home storm would be but a gentle breeze.

On Saturday morning the wind was high; it increased in the afternoon, until towards evening it became simply terrific. About six o'clock, we, in “The Olives,” a long low house lying along the top of a hill, saw our roof lifting and swaying, the tiles floating away and the house rocking; so we forthwith packed our belongings into baskets, thinking we might soon have to depart. Each minute the wind became stronger, pouring rain began and the darkness grew black.

The tiles having taken themselves off, the rain had every opportunity for coming in, which it did ceaselessly, flooding most parts of the house and bringing down large patches of plaster from the ceilings.

By this time escape seemed almost impossible. We collected in a dry end of the sitting-room, sang appropriate hymns from our Irish Church Hymnal, though the sound of our voices was drowned in the roaring of the wind, prayed and read the ninety-first Psalm, and then, resting on its promises, went to lie down, but hardly to

sleep, for, as each fresh crash came, there was a general rush to see what had happened, or to hold some broken shutter in a blinding shower-bath of wind and rain, until it could be more securely fastened.

“ How nice,” we thought, “ to be in one of the new houses (which had looked so secure the day before), instead of being in this rickety old shanty perched on the top of a hill.” Vain thought! Shortly after midnight a voice from outside calling for help was heard above the raging of the wind. With difficulty the door was opened and Dr. Sandiman staggered in, carrying his baby, followed by Mrs. Sandiman and their *amah* (Chinese nurse), missionaries from Amoy, who had fled in desperation to us from their own newly-built, but now tumble-down house. Drenched through and dazed, after a most perilous scramble over a potato-field, and a climb on hands and knees up the hill, and bruised from having been blown against the rocks in the pitch darkness, they arrived utterly exhausted to be warmly welcomed by ten *Ku-Nionsgs*.

And still the storm raged, but after that we felt more secure in a house to which God had sent others of His children for safety.

When daylight came we were glad, for it is easier not to mind things in the light.

It was a strange Sunday morning! Food was our first consideration, but the kitchen roof having almost departed, we did not expect much in that line. However the cook, rising to the occasion, somehow managed to make a good brew of soup, which we found most acceptable. While we were taking it, a few of the gentlemen arrived on the scene, to see if we were in need of help.

They had had a difficult journey up to us, and of course were extremely wet, for the storm, though a little lighter, was still very fierce. One most kindly asked some of us to go to his house, which had wonderfully escaped; an invitation which we thankfully accepted for three amongst us who were not strong. We sent them off, clinging to their protectors. They were immediately lost sight of in the storm of mist and wind.

Then we remained gathered together in the driest room and had our Sunday morning service, led by Dr. Sandiman. We sang the chants and tried to do everything most correctly; and after that, we quite settled down, very wet and very dirty, but very cheerful.

The wind grew much quieter towards evening, and Monday morning bringing only ordinary showery, windy weather, some of us went for a tour of inspection around the ruins of Ku-Liang.

It was a sad spectacle of desolation, but we heard most amusing stories of midnight escapes and flights and we saw strange sights. Picture one of our missionaries sitting in bed, so as to keep a dry place for herself, the floor a pond, and the bed roofed over by a bath placed on the top of the poles for the mosquito curtains, to catch the drippings from the rafters!

Four of the *Ku-Nions* when taking flight had been urged by their servant to be sure and keep their mouths shut so that the wind might not get in!

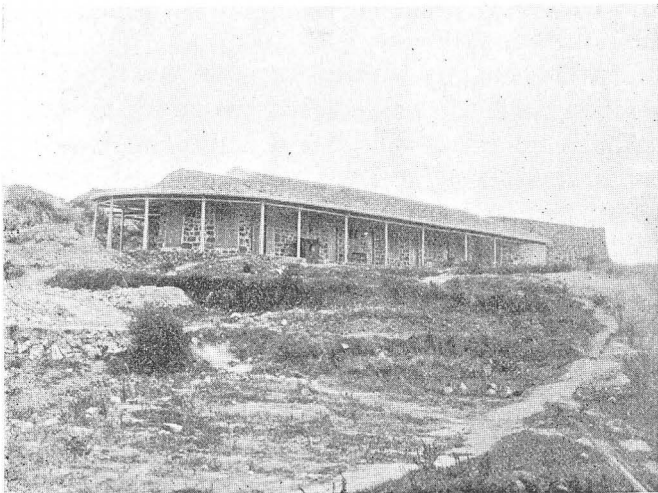
This same servant followed later on in the night, wearing his mistress's new sun-hat (the rain, of course, reducing it to pulp) in order to protect his head!

Many who were unable to escape, took refuge in small outhouses, or under umbrellas in the driest

corner of some room, passing the time by singing hymns.

Everyone was most cheerful over her lost and spoiled property. Some even comforted themselves with the thought that should another typhoon come, they would have considerably less to lose, which shewed a philosophical spirit quite worthy of China.

Perhaps the saddest loss of all was the destruction of our new Church only dedicated to God's service the Sunday before ; but funds towards



THE NEW KU-LIANG OLIVES; BUILT BY MISS LOCKE KING.

its re-building were quickly received, principally from those whose losses were the heaviest, as thank-offerings for preservation of life.

And, truly, we had much cause for thankfulness. No one was hurt, and no one became ill from chills or fever. Joyfulness only had been shewn over spoiled goods, and perfect rest and peace were given to each one at the most critical moments.

“ And though the tempest burst above,
The thunder peal will speak His love,
And lead me on.
The winds may howl their mournful tale,
I'm not afraid, I'm not afraid.
My Saviour rules the wildest gale,
And leads me on.”

All through the summer the gentlemen had been engaged in making what might almost be called peace negotiations with the *literati* of Kien-Ning city; and these, towards the end of August and September, were really coming to a satisfactory conclusion; while the Christians in their letters spoke of “all peace in the Church,” and were eagerly expecting our near return.

It was at first decided that we ladies should not go back to Kien-Ning until after the November Conference had taken place in Foo-Chow; so, when the other missionaries returned to their districts, invitations of the warmest description were received, asking us to spend our waiting-time in these up-country stations. Three of us, glad to be so far on the homeward road, went to Ku-Cheng, where Miss Johnson and I stayed most of the time at Sa-Iong with Miss Codrington, who was then in charge of the Women's School, and happy among her much loved pupils, whose absolute devotion to their teacher made the work one of great joy both to her and to them.

Meanwhile, the gentlemen went to Kien-Ning where they were well received by the Mandarins and *literati*, who not only agreed to give a sum of money as compensation for actual losses, but also sufficient to re-build the Church, which had been destroyed during the riot.

The twenty-fifth of October, 1899, was a red-letter day in the history of our mission. Forty

of the head men of Kien-Ning city and the Mandarins, met together to sign a bond in the presence of Dr. Rigg and Mr. Phillips, promising, among other things, to protect and respect foreigners, native Christians, and buildings belonging to them all through the Prefecture.

Shortly before this, permission had reached us who were waiting in Ku-Cheng, to return, if we considered it worth our while to pay a visit of three weeks' length, as we should have to leave again when the gentlemen went to Foo-Chow in order to attend the Conference.

Miss Johnson and I gladly availed ourselves of the permission, and immediately made arrangements for starting, but we found to our dismay that coolies and sedan-chairs were not to be hired ; for those not already engaged in carrying native Christians from distant villages to attend a Church Conference which was being held in Ku-Cheng city, expressed themselves both unwilling and afraid to attempt a journey to Kien-Ning after all that had taken place there.

We had asked that if we were not to go, something special might happen to hinder the plan. Was this the answer ?

We longed to see our Christians and they to see us. The suggestion, that we might *walk* back entirely falling in with our own wishes, we at once acted upon it, and set out one morning for a three days' tramp over beautiful mountain roads, hoping in the evening of the third day to reach Nang-Wa, and from there to go on by boat to our hospital.

It was not an eventful journey, and the friendly attitude shewn towards us by the people in the villages which we passed through, helped to make it pleasant and gave us many an opportunity for

speaking of the Saviour to those who had never heard of Him before. Then our joy in returning together, kept the continuous walking from becoming too wearisome, proving the truth of the old classical saying "A pleasant companion is as good as a coach."

Our only mishap turned out so well, that we were afterwards thankful for it.

We were delayed on the third day; but still, by pushing on, we hoped to arrive at Nang-Wa before nightfall. Tired and rather foot-sore we hurried on. It began to rain. The narrow, cobbled pathways became slippery; our speed had to slacken, and our hopes of reaching our destination that evening gradually faded away. Darkness was already upon us; where was the night to be spent?

"Sisters, come in here, in my house spend the night."

The invitation came from a woman standing in the doorway of a road-side cottage, who, in simple kindness of heart and pity, opened both her heart and her house to two foreigners, their load-man and servant-boy, an instance of the generous trusting hospitality so often to be met with in China.

Truly grateful to our unexpected and unknown hostess, we longed to repay her in the only way we could.

Until quite late that night she sat up listening to the story of a Saviour's love. We taught her a few sentences. She repeated them over and over again. Long before day-light the following morning she came to the loft placed at our disposal, to hear more of the things of Heaven.

As the first streak of dawn lit up the bare and dusty room, we left her. Upon the darkness of her

life a gleam of light from the Sun of Righteousness had shone at last!

“ Jesus, for me forgive sin, for me forgive sin,” were the words of a little prayer she whispered, as we parted from her.

“ Far and wide, though all unknowing,
Pants for Thee each mortal breast,
Human tears for Thee are flowing,
Human hearts in Thee would rest.

“ Dare we let them die in darkness,
When we have the Light of God,
And the life which has been purchased
With the Saviour’s precious blood?
Seek to win them,
Win them back through Christ to God.”

“ Slowly slowly,” it seemed to us, went our little boat from Nang-Wa that day. About ten p.m., in bright moon-light, we once more entered the hospital standing as we had left it that eventful morning only four months before. Now strains of praise rang through the empty rooms, as two happy people, quickly uncovering the harmonium, sang the Doxology.

What a welcome was given us upon the following Sunday morning when, after service in our city house, a little group of Christian women gathered around us.

“ Did not our Jesus keep you from fear, when you first met here for secret worship?” we questioned.

“ Sisters,” came the beautiful answer, “ our hearts knew no fear, because Jesus was together with us. Outside, the streets, like rough tumultuous waters, were all noise, loud voices, confusion. Inside here, our hearts, like still, still water, were all peace.”

The only people who owned to having been afraid, were the poor lepers in their settlement. "Suddenly," they said, "we heard great noise, the loud voices of many persons; then the devil's men rushed upon us. Those of us who could run, ran and hid on the hill close by, and in the evening came back, to find our Church destroyed, our Catechist and others gone; it was sad, very sad; we much feared."

The rioters had made the first attack upon them, cruelly regardless of human suffering in their fierce resentment against all "worshipping-God people"; but the very fact of the maddened mob rushing away from the city, and out to the little hamlet, had given many a Christian within the walls both time and opportunity to escape.

Having spent about a week in the hospital, we walked one morning to Ciong-Bau and received a welcome warm beyond description from the people there. Presents of every imaginable dainty were showered upon the sisters now "come home."

In spite of many threatenings and very real danger, no direct attack had been made upon them, and the story of their deliverance was remarkable.

A large idol festival and killing of the "eating-foreign-doctrine people" had been planned to take place upon the first Sunday after our escape. All the Ciong-Bau Christians met together for their usual prayer-meeting the previous Saturday evening.

"To-morrow," somebody said, "if we join for a big worship, it will only mean that we shall everyone be killed, better do worship secretly in our own houses."

At this Gaing-Seng, who was staying there, Mrs. Eng-Nu, the cake shop-man and his wife,

quickly answered in some such words as the following :—

“ If we are to be killed, it will be the voice of Jesus calling us to Heaven. If Jesus does not want us in Heaven yet, then the devil’s men cannot kill us. We need not fear. Only we must trust our Jesus, and to-morrow do a big worship in the Church, like other Sundays the same.”

And quite early the next morning the little congregation met in Church, not one member remaining away.

“ Now we can pray, very much pray to God,” some said, “ but we had better not sing hymns ; just quietly, quietly do worship.”

“ Not sing !” exclaimed Gaing-Seng. “ We must sing, truly there would be sadness in Heaven to-day, if from Ciong-Bau no praise voices were heard, only the angry sounds of the devil’s men shouting.”

Soon, in the distance, the clashing of cymbals reached the little company of worshippers, bringing the sound of a great procession nearer every moment.

“ Never mind, never mind, do not listen,” urged Gaing-Seng, “ our Jesus can save us, He is with us now.”

Nearer and nearer the procession came, and then, without turning down a narrow lane leading directly to the Church, it passed to another street.

“ Praise God, thank Jesus, thank our Jesus,” breathed the Christians.

“ Let us go,” begged some of the younger boys, “ to the upstairs verandah of the sisters’ house, and see from there what has happened, and why we are saved.”

“ No,” said Gaing-Seng again, “ leave the devil’s things alone, stay here ; with loud voices sing hymns. God has saved us.”

Later in the day, they learned how God had delivered them.

The head-man of a small neighbouring village, arriving in Ciong-Bau before the procession, had met its advance to the Church lane, by standing with arms outstretched from wall to wall across the narrow opening.

"Listen," he said, as the leaders drew near. "I am not a worshipping-God man. I, like you, worship idols; but, think a moment, if we kill these Christians, and destroy their Church, it is we who will have to eat sorrow, not they; they know no fear. It is upon ourselves trouble will come. Far better leave them alone."

He spoke as one with authority, and the procession moved off another way.

The condition of affairs during the next few weeks might well be described as a reign of terror, when, as one of our teachers forcibly expressed it, "The man walking in front feared the man walking behind, while the man walking behind feared the man walking in front," for every stranger was suspected of being in some vague way employed by the foreigners to carry out their evil and, possibly, supernatural designs.

Then a strange panic took possession of the heathen in the neighbourhood of Ciong-Bau. "Soldiers fierce and terrible," it was reported, "are coming to destroy us for our share in the riot."

Many who had relatives in distant mountain villages fled to them for safety, while others actually came to the Christians pleading for protection. "You are safe," they said, "you have no fear; we are all fear, we have no help."

And the Christians, gladly availing themselves of such an opportunity, comforted them regarding

their fears, but spoke of an infinitely greater soul-danger and of a full and free salvation.

In the course of this visit to Ciong-Bau, Miss Johnson and I had the great pleasure of being present while two families burnt their idols and openly began to worship God, led to the point of confession, they told us, by having watched our Christians in the time of danger and having observed their absolute freedom from fear and quiet enjoyment of peace, even when daily expecting not only to suffer, but to die for their faith. And often since, when not a few have disappointed us by apparent failure in their Christian walk, we like to remember how firmly they all stood in the day of real trial; and we also remember with shame, how much there must be in our lives, lived as they have been from earliest years in the knowledge of a Saviour's power, to cause sorrow to our Master, Who yet will “perfect that which concerneth” both us and those who, until so recently, were shrouded in the blackest of heathen darkness.

Greatly cheered by this three weeks' visit, which all too soon came to an end, we obtained leave to spend the time the gentlemen would be away from Kien-Ning, in a village situated in an outlying part of the district, which had been un-reached by the least breath of disturbance and where a handful of converts, much in need of teaching, were in charge of Deng Sing-Saing, the former Catechist of Ciong-Bau.

About the first week in December, exile for any of us became a thing of the past. The storm was over, and the clouds which had covered the blue, were gone. So, gladly returning, each branch of the work was resumed with fresh hope and courage, for, as Miss Johnson had remarked when the

sky above our heads was most black and lowering,
“ This trouble is only the back-wash of a wave to
come in with a full tide.”

“ Through waves and clouds and storms,
 He gently clears thy way ;
Wait thou His time ; so shall this night
 Soon end in joyous day.

“ Leave to His sovereign sway
 To choose and to command ;
So shalt thou, wondering, own His way,
 How wise, how strong His hand ! ”

CHAPTER XII.

A LEPER, AND BLIND.

“And there shall be no more curse: . . . And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.”—*Revelation xxii., 3-5.*



SOON after our return I was able to pay the Christian family at Súing-tê a short visit. They had suffered during the riot, but not to the extent which had at first been reported, and they were glad to pour out an account of how, when their house was attacked and huge stones thrown against it, their “hearts were all peace, for Jesus was with us. Great stones fell on the roof and through it, but none upon us or our children.” “Come out, sister, to the roof,” they said, “and see some of these stones.”

Large blocks lay on the loose tiling.

“Why leave them there?” I questioned.

“Sister,” they answered, “we cannot remove one, for now when doubt or fear come to our hearts we look at these stones, and think how Jesus kept them from coming through upon our heads that day. The devil’s men were strong to throw them there, but our Jesus was stronger than they. And if He saved us then, He can save us again.”

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.”

In the spring before the riot each member of this family had received baptism, with the exception of two children, who were in our Christian boarding-schools.

“It was good, very good,” they said, “to have entered the Church of God before all this trouble came upon us.”

Miss Fleming, returning from furlough about this time, felt strongly led to give the people of Nang-Wa another chance, as it were, so she and Miss Coleston settled into the former C.M.S. house, which had just been vacated by Mr. and Mrs. White, whose health had unfortunately suffered so much while in Kien-Ning, that they were not resuming work in our north-west district. Now Nang-Wa, very wicked and superstitious, and apparently as hard as ever, once more owned a C.E.Z.M.S. station, containing two praying people, who went fully convinced that the Almighty God had souls there which He longed to save from the hands of a mighty enemy. Wonderfully has the faith of these workers been honoured. From the very first the power of the Holy Spirit was shewn by an awakening of new interest in a message, which had often been unheeded when faithfully given before.

Yet, it has never once been received without the calling forth of active hostility from the enemy, who finds it hard to see his former prisoners rejoicing in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free.

The fight at Nang-Wa is fierce and long, but through it all the soldiers of the King are being refreshed by gentle continuous showers of blessing whereby they gain many a victory to the praise of His glorious Name. To-day, quite a company of Nang-Wa converts are gathered together for teaching in an adjoining house, which has lately been bought and adapted for the purpose.

Patients to the Kien-Ning hospital were not as numerous as we could have wished. Fear still

held many back ; but the city was open to us again, and its people were, on the whole, friendly.

About once a week we visited a little hamlet which lies outside the walls. Leaving the busy crowded streets and passing through one of the deeply arched gateways, we walked for a few hundred yards along narrow pathways, bordered with shrubs, which are beautiful in the spring-time with flowers and tender greens.

We sometimes stood still awhile at the entrance to look and listen, when the quietness would become noticeable. The houses, or rather sheds, shewed signs of poverty, squalor, and dilapidation without and within.

“Alas ! Alas !” How often the silence is broken by this exclamation ! Sudden movements call it forth.

It is a place where life is slack, not abundant ; and without vigour or energy. Men and women lean listlessly against any available props, or sit dejectedly upon low forms and comfortless blocks of wood. Children healthy enough in appearance play about ; but their merriment is not of the boisterous kind, and it could not well be, for they are the children of leper parents growing up in a leper settlement, daily becoming better acquainted with sights of pain, misery, and wretchedness.

On our advance, they see us and shout, “The sisters have come, the sisters have come !” Some few take no notice, and neither move nor care ; but others, hearing the words, emerge from their huts, and repeat them joyfully.

“Peace, sisters, peace,” they add. It is good to be reminded of some of those who so gladly come forward to greet us with this beautiful Christian salutation. Here is one woman ; her face is terribly disfigured, each feature is marred. She

is lame too, for the dread disease attacked her long ago and very heavily.

“Come and sit down,” she says, painfully leading the way to a small court opening out of an unpretentious idol-temple. “Now, sing our joy hymn, tell us things of Heaven, there no sin, no pain.”

Then peace deepens upon several already peaceful faces, and quiet restful joy smooths out lines of pain, as we sing together a very favourite chorus:—

“Joy! Joy! wonderful joy!
Peace! Peace! which none can destroy.
Love! Love! so boundless and free.
All this my Lord gives to me.
Yes; He gives me peace and pardon,
Joy without alloy.”

The idols in the temple behind us stand upon their shelves, dusty, hideous and lifeless. Joy has not yet entered into the lives of those who worship them; upon their faces still rests that unvarying expression of utter hopelessness, making man almost resemble the wooden image of his own creation.

But in the Kien-Ning settlement more than thirty lepers, having turned from idols, are now serving the living God. The Lord Jesus, moved with compassion, has touched their hearts and healed them, and it is truly wonderful to see His grace triumphing over the extremity of bodily misery.

Once more, they have a small Church of their own, built since the riot, and in which regular services are held, led by a leper Catechist.*

A visit we paid them one very hot afternoon comes back to my mind. The weather was so unusually oppressive that any extra pain must have been hard to bear.

* “The Mission to Lepers in India and the East” largely helps in the carrying on of this work, and to it our most grateful thanks are due.

The lepers around us were inclined to be inattentive, so, in order to arouse them, we ceased teaching for a little while and began speaking of surnames—a subject which seldom fails to interest the Chinese. The plan was successful, and some one said, “Sister, here among us is a man, his surname with yours is the same.”

“With mine the same?” I echoed in surprise. “Why, then, has he not come to greet me?” For in China a relationship might reasonably be claimed from such a coincidence. (Upon our arrival in China as missionaries, we are each given a Chinese surname, for our own would sound foreign, and even unintelligible to the natives, who never question our right to those we assume.)

“Alas,” they answered, “he is much to be pitied, his temper is bad, he speaks to no one.”

They shewed me his house. I stood in the door-way and said slowly, “My same-surname man, your same-surname sister has come from very far to speak with you.”

“My same-surname sister?” he muttered.

“Yes,” I repeated. “I very much want you to come out and listen.”

In a few moments, to our delight, he appeared, found his way to a low form, and sat down listening; but oh, the intense sadness of his face, the face of a heathen blind leper!

In subsequent visits his place was seldom vacant, and we grew accustomed to see him occupying the same seat; but he never spoke, nor did we directly address him, still we fancied his expression was not so sad, and that the dark clouds of depression were gradually breaking.

One evening, a poor woman whose hands were fingerless, and who looked worn out with pain, suddenly said:—

“Sisters, you say, God loves us ; you say, God hears our prayers ; you say, He knows all ; but I do not think it can be so. Last night my pain was greater than I can describe, no sleep came to me. I prayed, and very much prayed to God. The more I prayed, the worse my pain became. Truly He cannot love us ; we have sin, we have sickness. He cannot want us, He does not know.”

While waiting to be given the right words wherewith to answer her, my namesake stood up. He faced the speaker, and we all listened as he said :—

“I ask you to tell me, when did you ever hear the sisters teach that God will take our pain away ? I never once heard them say so. They teach that in this world God will help us to bear our pain, to bear our sadness ; afterwards, if we trust in Jesus, He will take us to Heaven, there all peace, there no pain, there great joy.”

He sat down again, and we thanked God ; for the light was indeed dawning upon his darkness.

Since then, “the Sun of Righteousness” has arisen upon him “with healing in His wings” ; and where He is present, darkness cannot be. “Diàn” is now known as “a worshipping-God man,” identifying himself with the other Christians, and making a good example and confession of faith.

News has lately reached us of the young woman mentioned before as so gladly leading us to the little court in order to join in singing her favourite “Joy” chorus.

Miss Johnson, after an absence of over a year, returned from furlough to find her very ill, almost dying she then thought. As word of a “sister’s” arrival reached her, she painfully crawled to the

doorway, leaning on a stool. "Thank God, thank Jesus, you have come," she said; "He is good, my heart is peace."

Another day, when the end seemed very near, Miss Johnson, sitting and watching her, was greatly struck by the expression of peace resting upon the almost featureless face, an expression to which one of quiet hopeful brightness was added, as she gently remarked upon some words spoken to cheer a soul so nearly in "the valley of the shadow of death."

"My Saviour," she whispered, "He very much loves me; when in a little while I see him, I shall fall at His feet, and caress them."

From afar she gazed at the Glory Land, longing to enter in, but the gates have not yet opened to admit the waiting soul.

She revived wonderfully after a season of great prostration, and is regaining some little measure of strength.

Now the thought of baptism fills her mind. "But it must not take place here," she says, "this kitchen is very much not clean, it is all dirty, I am dirty. My husband has no hands, I have no strength, he cannot make it clean; better wait until I can go to our Church."

"Listen," Miss Johnson said, "if God sees your heart is trusting in Him for pardon, He will look on it as clean and precious in spite of the dirtiest surroundings!"

"True, true," she answered, "like picking up out of the mire something of value wrapped in very old rags; these God will take off, throw away, and keep the precious thing inside for Himself."

Yes, that poor diseased frame contains a "precious thing," "chosen . . . in Him

before the foundation of the world," to be holy, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself . . . not having spot, or wrinkle or any such thing."

"Kept till the Heavenly bridegroom
 Claims her his chosen bride,
 Kept then to be for ever
 Close to His blessed side.
 Kept His "peculiar treasure,"
 Ransomed by precious blood.
 Kept as the jewels gathered
 With which to deck His brow."

We love our work among the lepers, and count it a privilege to be used in any way to lead them out of their miserable darkness into the light of the knowledge of Jesus. Upon the lives of some it shines with a wonderful radiancy, while others, clinging to their own wretchedness, receive it but faintly. For, in the Chinese mind, sickness is looked upon as so direct a consequence of personal sin, that the majority of lepers find it difficult to believe that the one can be taken away while the other remains.

Still there are many to-day, not only in the Kien-Ning settlement, but also in those at Foo-Chow, Lo-Nguong, Ku-Cheng, and Hing-Hwa, and again not alone in this Fuh-Kien Province, but throughout the vast countries of the East, who, looked upon by the world as outcasts, have been received by our Mighty Redeemer into both His visible and invisible Church; to stand one day, not "outside the camp" but in the City where "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." "For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe

away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. xxi., 4 ; vii., 17.)

On an opposite side of the city, but inside the walls, there is another settlement of special interest, known as the "Blind Asylum." In it whole families of sightless men, women and even children have congregated. They earn their living by a recognized system of begging and fortune-telling ; ill-luck being supposed to attend any house from which a blind beggar has been turned away without the customary gift of at least two cash, or an equivalent in food.

Up to the present, our work among them has not been satisfactory, for their confidence in us is as difficult to gain as it is to keep. Naturally they are much influenced by the attitude of the people, with whom they come in daily contact, towards the foreigners ; so that when a season of suspicious fear prevails through the city, it affects the settlement to such an extent that, not only doors, but hearts are shut against us while it lasts. And yet among them there are a few who dimly worship God.

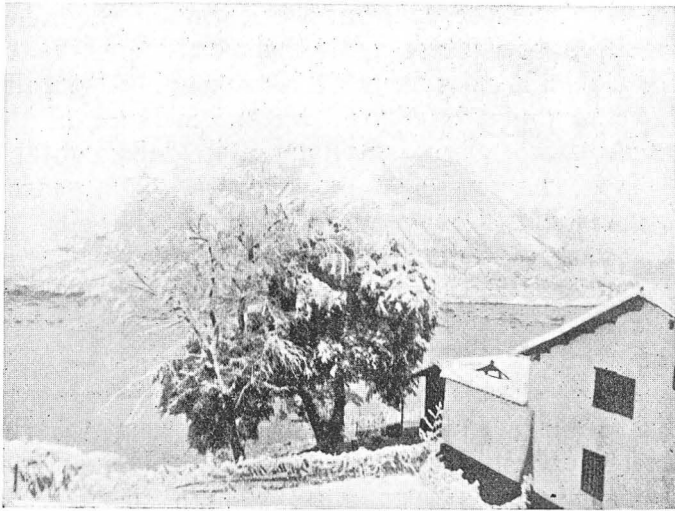
One very old woman, who, after listening to Miss Johnson's teaching, gave her heart to the Saviour some years ago, has we believe been trusting in Him ever since, though occasionally she reverts to her former occupation of telling beads before the idols. "You need not be sad about it, sisters, you need not be sad," she will say, whenever we find her so engaged, "It is only with my words I worship idols, my inside heart trusts Jesus to save me."

Two or three of the men now attend service in the city Church ; while the hearts of others, both men and women, are at least turning towards the light.

At the beginning of January, 1900, the weather was unusually severe; snow fell heavily, and for about three days lay some inches deep upon the ground.

This caused much distress in a land where the houses are built with a view to keeping out heat and letting in coolness, and where the comfort of either stoves or fire-places is unknown.

Extra clothes are worn, making everyone suddenly increase in bulk, for it is no uncommon thing to be six or even more "coats cold,"



VIEW FROM THE WOMEN'S HOSPITAL IN THE SNOW.

and we all carry and greatly appreciate a little basket containing an earthenware pot in which a few sticks of red-hot charcoal are placed, covered over with hot ashes.

Many a time have we heard the native Catechists in their preaching, take the comfort given to our bodies by these fire-baskets, as an

illustration of the deadness and coldness of our hearts, until God's Holy Spirit comes to make them alive and hot.

One morning, while the snow lay deepest upon the ground, Dr. Pakenham happily thought of sending a few loads of rice to the blind asylum, fearing the poor inmates, unable to make their usual begging expeditions, might be very badly off. Two of us gladly went to distribute this gift.

On our way to the settlement, we passed through narrow, slippery, slushy streets, bordered here and there with snow-men fashioned to resemble one of the temple Buddhas, with lighted sticks of incense placed in their quickly thawing hands.

We stood beside the melting images, which were supposed to propitiate the air and water spirits, and spoke to groups of on-lookers about the One Eternal God, praying that the contrast might strike some of them.

When we reached our destination, we came upon a scene of appalling destitution.

For three days no food had been obtained, as without eye-sight men feared to venture out upon streets so changed and still. Hungry, cold, and blind, they crowded around us, gratefully and gladly taking their several shares of rice and charcoal.

Suddenly we heard a woman exclaim, as she pointed towards a young man, with whom we were well acquainted as one who loved to argue in a doubting, questioning way, about the Jesus-Doctrine, "It is all through him! Truly, this rice is through him; he had nothing to eat yesterday, nothing to eat this morning; like us all, he was hungry to death. We scolded Heaven, but

he has never ceased saying, 'Thank God, thank Jesus; thank God, thank Jesus'; this Jesus has heard his call and has given, not only him but us all, our rice and charcoal."

It was lovely to be allowed to supply a need for which this poor lad had thanked beforehand; but lovelier still to hear the gift ascribed not to us, but to the One Who "doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men"; and only in order "that they should seek (their) Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him."

And we, too, must praise beforehand for the blessing, which we know will be given on the work among the blind of Kien-Ning, a blessing richly bestowed upon those in Ku-Cheng, Lieng-Kong and Foo-Chow.

For years past Miss Johnson has been longing and watching for an opportunity to start some definite work among these afflicted people, and above all, to teach even a few to read God's Word by means of the Braille system, which has already been adapted to the Kien-Ning dialect; but so far, owing to fear of one kind or another, no such opening has come.

We have reason to believe, though, that before very long our hopes in this direction will be realized, and that many of those now sitting in darkness will rise in joyful answer to His call and follow Jesus in the way.



MISS OXLEY AND HER BLIND BOYS, FOO-CHOW.

CHAPTER XIII.

A STATION CLASS.

FEW efforts in connection with our work amongst the women of Fuh-Kien have been more valuable and successful than the opening of Station Classes and Schools, where they receive training and teaching which it is almost impossible to give them in their own homes. These are now held in every district containing mission centres throughout the Province. Miss M. E. Clarke, of the Dublin University Fuh-Kien Mission, Fuh-Ning, writes in a letter which appeared in the *Gleaner* for April, 1902 :—

“ ‘ Women’s Schools,’ ‘ Women’s Station Classes ’—the terms always seem somewhat to puzzle home friends ! So often are the questions asked, ‘ What is a Women’s School ? ’ or, ‘ What do you mean by a Station Class ? ’

“ The answers are simple ; a ‘ women’s school ’ is one to which the wife of any Christian man may come for two years to be instructed in the way of God more perfectly. A ‘ station class ’ is a one, two, or three months’ school to which ‘ enquirers ’ are invited, and where they are taught the ‘ old, old story ’ so new to them.

“ These answers given, another question naturally arises, ‘ How can women leave their homes and attend school ? ’

“ At home such a thing would hardly be feasible, but Chinese custom renders it practicable, and, with a limited staff of workers, it is at present the only means whereby the women, scattered over a wide area, can be properly taught.

“ In China, as each son marries he takes his bride to his father’s house ; thus, under one roof-tree many families, more or less nearly related, are usually to be found. Here is a case in point. Three married sons lived with their old mother. They all became enquirers, and wished their wives to come to school. First the eldest brother’s wife came, the others doing her share of cooking and housework. Later on the second sister-in-law came, the first taking her place in the family economy. . . .

“ Often we find the women eager to make the most of their opportunity, beginning work much earlier than their time-table suggests, and carrying it on long after the hour required. Even before six a.m. and after ten p.m. have we heard the hum of their voices reading.

“ Here and there from various sources, come testimonies which shew that the lessons have not been in vain, and that the same Spirit, Who opened the hearts to receive them, has enabled the lives to live these lessons out. Here we are told of one who is doing all in her power to lead her neighbours to the knowledge of what she holds so dear. There we hear of another who, amidst persecution, is letting her light shine.

“ A Catechist brings in word from a country village that, since coming back from school, Ale-Mu has been so different, so gentle and docile ; her husband and mother-in-law are delighted, and want to learn the doctrine which has so changed her.

“ On a dying bed we find one who had been with us for three months. ‘ I cannot worship (*i.e.*, have family prayers) as we did at school,’ she says, ‘ but I pray lying here. I cannot get up to kneel, but I can still pray.’ From that

squalid home, where she stood alone in her faith, she went 'to be with Christ' a few days later.

"As we visit one village after another, and see the manifest change in many who have been at school, and find them plainly shewing Whose they are and Whom they serve, and seeking to draw others to the Saviour, we thank God and take courage. From such visits we return to our work of teaching, 'precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little,' for they are ignorant and sometimes dull of perception, though anxious to learn. We start afresh with cheered hearts, having seen that our 'labour is not in vain in the Lord.'"

The women in a station class are brought into very close touch with their teacher. The several sorrows, difficulties and temptations in each one's home-life become known to the "sister," who thus learns better how to sympathize and help.

During this spring (1900), when our hospital patients were few, and spare rooms were plentiful, some eleven women, all of them "baby Christians," gladly accepted an invitation to spend a month with us learning the things of Jesus.

I like to look back upon that month, when the daily six to eight teaching hours passed all too quickly for the little group, whose strenuous efforts to take in and remember were almost pathetic.

They varied widely in age, from a fourteen-year-old wife to a dear old woman, who came from our Christian family at Súng-tê. After the first week the latter unbound her feet, and we rejoiced, seeing in the action an expression of true surrender.

"All my life," she said, "I have been accustomed to have my feet small and good to look at ;

but now Jesus teaches me not to mind if they are ugly, as with large feet I can do better service for Him." "Since your last visit to Súing-tê, sister," she remarked one day, "we know that our mouths also belong to Jesus, so not many bad words are heard; though sometimes from custom my daughter-in-law quickly curses the children, afterwards she prays God to forgive her."

Such practical testimonies, bearing witness to the Christ-life within and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, make us happy; helping us to enter into something of the "joy" spoken of in 3 John 4.

Géng-Mue (Golden Sister) is the name of the poor little fourteen-year-old wife. We knew her first as a wild uncouth child, coming from a very idolatrous household, who lived in a village lying below our hospital compound, to attend a class for children which Dr. Pakenham held on Sunday afternoons. Then we lost sight of her for a while, and, upon making enquiries, heard that she had been sold to a heathen woman in Kien-Ning city, as a wife for her adopted and hunch-back son.

One day a little girl dressed in fine clothes, her face heavily painted and her hair covered with flowers and ornaments, came up to our house in great delight.

"Sister, sister," she cried, "truly I am very glad to see you again, I have come to stay with my own mother for a month."

I scarcely recognized her as the Géng-Mue we knew, but she laughed at my surprise and immediately said, "I want you to teach me more about Jesus. I remember some of the 'Jesus loves me' hymn, and 'Our Heavenly Father' prayer; these I say every day and have taught them to my relations, but I do not know much meaning.

Will you teach me more while I am here? and then I shall be able to tell my home-people more about the doctrine."

Her appearance was opportune, for the station class was to open upon the following day. Her mother consented to her attending it, so, among the other and older women she came to stay in our house, gladly spending her holiday in this way. She proved a valuable addition to the number, enlivening us continually by the originality of her remarks and questions. When, in turn, she repeated one of the newly learned Bible stories—a plan we devised so as to ensure an intelligent reception—her version, told with much spirit and action, was always amusing, and full of detail supplied by her own imagination. She delighted in the story of Adam and Eve.

"God planted a beautiful garden," she would say, "a cool, cool place, very many trees giving shade, very many flowers good to look at, every kind of fruit good to eat. In this garden God put a man whose name was Adam.

"Adam could do as he liked all day, he was never tired, never ill; when he wanted to eat he went to the fruit trees and ate fruit. Even the wild animals were gentle in the garden, Adam did not fear them, he chose names for them. But Adam was lonely, he had no one with whom to speak words; so God said, 'This must not be;' therefore God came into the garden, commanded Adam to lie on his bed. Adam lay down and heavily, heavily slept. Then God gently came, cut Adam's side, took out one bone, placed it on the ground while He mended Adam's side, mended it so completely that no mark was to be seen.

"Using Adam's bone God made a woman, very very good to look at, skin white exceedingly,

face lovely, hair very black, very shiny. When she was quite ready, Adam awoke. He opened his eyes, he saw Eve, he was very surprised, he quickly, quickly got up, he said 'You, where are you from?' 'Adam,' she answered, 'I am bone of your bone, I am flesh of your flesh.'

"Adam then was pleased exceedingly, he was no longer friendless, he very much loved her, they two people did not know sadness."

In the same graphic manner she described Eve's disobedience, insisting that "the devil, borrowing the serpent's form, appeared with three heads," and that when "Eve had eaten the apple her face turned black and ugly."

The errors in these stories always proved more difficult to correct than the whole had been to teach.

She had been with us about a fortnight thoroughly happy and interested, when her relations, hearing she was being taught the foreign doctrine, suddenly sent for her and took her away. Very sadly she left, assuring us that she was trusting in and praying to the Lord Jesus, that He would cure her of a hasty violent temper, and help her to be His witness.

"I will persuade my relations to invite you to our house, because," said the poor child, "the people in my home are many, I one person alone worship Jesus, very, very difficult. If my mother-in-law could only hear your teaching, she too might worship, and I would have help."

But no invitation came, and we could only pray for her.

Several weeks later, when returning one evening from visiting in the city, we were caught in a sudden and heavy shower of rain.

"Come in here and shelter awhile. Come sit, drink tea," called a woman, who was standing in the doorway of a large house.

We gladly accepted the welcome invitation, and followed our new acquaintance into the guest-hall, where we were received with unusual ceremony and politeness.

Having well supplied us with tea and sugarcandy, she said, "You do not know me, but I know all about you. I also know the doctrine, it is good, but eating-doctrine people have bad tempers. I know about Jesus, I know all about Adam and Eve."

"Géng-Mue!" we exclaimed, "does she live here, are you her mother-in-law?"

"Yes," she answered, "but Géng-Mue does not live here now. See," she said, shewing us the baby in her arms. "Before this, my own child, was born, I bought a son and I bought Géng-Mue to be his wife, but now I do not need them, they have gone to a house of their own."

Upon further questioning we heard, to our dismay, that Géng-Mue's hunch-back husband was one of a band of some eight or nine undertakers—the very lowest class of men in China—and that she, a poor little fourteen-year-old wife, was keeping house for them all without any other woman to help her.

"How could you treat her so?" exclaimed Cie-Aing, who was with me. "Truly you had no love for her, I pray you now to tell us where she lives," and the woman did so, looking remorseful and ashamed, perhaps for the first time.

In a very little while we stood on the threshold of a small and dilapidated house. "Géng-Mue," I said. She looked up, stood still for a moment, then, bursting into tears, she almost threw herself into my arms.

"I am so glad to see you," she sobbed, "so glad, but it is hard to be a Christian here, I do pray to Jesus, sometimes I have peace, but my temper is so bad—every day I am angry."

At that moment her husband appeared and, standing facing us, sneeringly remarked, "She is speaking true words; all worshipping-God people have very bad tempers."

As we answered him quietly but to the point, he looked a little ashamed of himself, and moved away.

"It is like this," continued Géng-Mue, "in the mornings when I boil too little rice for the day's meals, they with loud voices scold me; if I boil too much they also scold me; I am not tall enough to stand over the stove to stir the vegetables—they are often burnt. This makes them very angry, they beat me, truly it is hard to bear."

She looked so small, so care-worn and weighed down with a burden of responsibility and weary of her very existence in its vile surroundings. Oh, how sharp the contrast between such a life and the free, happy, shielded lives of her sisters in our own favoured lands!

Great was her delight when, having obtained her husband's leave, we promised to call for her on Sundays, bring her to Church, and keep her for the day.

"I shall be ready for you," she whispered, as we left the house, "Your plan is good, very good."

But upon the following Sunday when we appeared, instead of looking "ready," she was wearing her oldest clothes.

"Have you forgotten?" we questioned.

"Not so, not so," she answered joyfully, "I will be with you in a moment, see, this old

coat only covers my best clothes, my hair is also dressed. If the men had known how anxiously I was waiting, they might have forbidden me to go with you."

We were only able to give her a few of these blissful Sundays before, owing to the Boxer movement, our sudden departure from the district took place. They were days which she would have described as "like Heaven the same," when away from polluting influences she could breathe freely in a clear, bright atmosphere of love and trust.

And so we left her to shine as best she could in a place of thick darkness, temptation, and danger, and alas! we were not sure that her heart was fully given to Him Who alone could keep it pure and true.

After about eighteen months Miss Johnson met her again, and found but little light remaining. Géng-Mue had struggled to "hold fast" in her own strength, and failed.

Oh, if those who, in reading this account, have been moved to pity the girl-wife living to-day in the far-off city of Kien-Ning, would not only pity, but faithfully, definitely and continually pray for her, the result without doubt would be an awakening of new desires, new longings, and an earnest seeking for the Saviour, Who so gladly meets the seeking soul.

May we count it a privilege to share in the joy of winning this little one for our Lord!

Besides the dear old woman from Súing-tê and poor little Géng-Mue, there were several women in that station class whose histories, although interesting in themselves, might appear wearisome if written down at length.

There was Deng-Gian, a young married woman, solemn, reserved, and absolutely trustworthy,

who, during those weeks, really gave her heart to the Saviour Whom she had been outwardly worshipping for some time before. No additions adorned her Bible stories. As we taught, so she repeated almost word for word, the while gently rocking in her arms the baby girl she most truly loved.

She is now acting as cook in the Women's hospital, and is no longer known as "Deng-Gian" but as "Cuoi-Sang" (Born-anew), a name given to her on the day of her baptism.

Entirely different in style and character was a light and rather flippant little woman whom we all called "Aunt."

She came so near to the Kingdom at times, and then withdrew so far again, that we hardly knew what to say to her.

In class she was difficult to teach, and arising from that fact I learnt many a lesson in patience. Sometimes, when I had looked rather than spoken a remonstrance at continued inattention, I would see her head go down upon the table, and hear some such whispered prayer as the following:—

"Lord Jesus, Holy Spirit, help me to learn, I so quickly forget, I make Diàn-sister sad."

These sudden and audible prayers always helped us both.

Among those most keen to learn was Meng-Ngu (Bright Jewel), a brave earnest little Christian about nineteen years of age, who from the time when she first came to us as a hospital patient, has been both a joy and encouragement.

The illness from which she suffered necessitated frequent visits for treatment. After the first she returned to her home as a "worshipping-God person," and soon gained her husband's consent

to make the fact public by unbinding her feet. The village in which she lived changed from hostility to friendliness.

Meng-Ngu's Christianity was attractive. Her little services held in the kitchen on Sunday mornings were unique; one old woman known as "Bo-Geng's mother" joined with her in singing the hymns and choruses learnt in the hospital, "and then we always pray for you sisters," she told me. Very occasionally they started at day-break to walk to the hospital church, a distance of some six miles, arriving hot, foot-sore and tired, but extremely pleased at having accomplished so much.

The class study was of course a great joy to her. "Teach me the Prayer - book prayers by heart," she asked me one morning, "Shew me on the page where they begin and end, for, if I can point to each character with my finger, and say what it means, then perhaps the men of my house might join our worship; what they see in a book, they more readily believe."

And, in this manner, although unable to read, she learnt the Lord's Prayer, General Confession and Thanksgiving.

Once, when speaking of the various ways in which we can make our confession of faith very open, Meng-Ngu was asked if she would not like to hang up some text scrolls on the walls of her rooms, from which former idol pictures had been removed.

"How could I?" came the quick, reproachful answer, "The devil's things are about."

"Yes," we assented, "but not in your part of the house."

"No matter," she continued decidedly, "they are in the large guest-hall, only the small hall

behind belongs to me, and while the devil sits in the front best place, God cannot, must not sit in the back. Were the front hall mine, it would be different."

She suffered a good deal of reproach during the riot of 1899, and from so bravely identifying herself, even at the worst time of danger, with the church, and with us, she was nicknamed "The little foreigner."

The very evening of the day upon which the burning of the City Church had taken place a few men from the street came to her saying, "You are indeed being deceived by these foreigners, their wickedness has been proved. To-day in the doctor's house a sealed tin was opened containing pink flesh—undoubtedly that of a preserved baby."

"Not so, not so," exclaimed our brave champion, "it was only foreign food—foreign fish or foreign meat—bring it to me, I will eat some in order to convince you."

Upon our return to the district, she soon walked to greet us, and her delight when we occasionally go to visit her is touching in its intensity.

Severe testing times always follow the return home from the station classes.

"My house was so dirty when I got there," is a common remark, or, "Formerly I swept only the middle of the hall, now the edges look so dirty, I have to sweep them also."

But actual trouble only comes in connection with their Christianity, and few things give us greater pleasure than the receiving of some such testimony as the following, shewing how the truth which was only theory in class, is practised at home.

"Shortly after I came home, I was sad to death," the only Christian woman in a large

household said to us. "Everyone despises me, all difficulties are attributed to me, from morning to night I am scolded. Now my husband is ill, and cannot work, my son is constantly attacked with ague, and they all say it is because I am dishonouring the idols. One evening, when in great trouble, I went to the tile-maker's wife, who, since returning from the class, has also suffered. Together we agreed that being worshipping-God people certainly brought us sorrow. Suddenly we said, 'Surely this is one of the times in which we may leap for joy, the words we learnt are true, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for behold your reward is great in heaven."'


"We together knelt, prayed to Jesus to help us; afterwards great peace was in our hearts."

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." (St. John xvi., 33.)

CHAPTER XIV.

FIELDS ALREADY WHITE.

“Darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light.”—*Genesis i., 2-3.*

S long ago as midsummer, 1898, Hö Hok-Sing, a Christian watch-mender from Foo-Chow, visited Dr. Rigg in Kien-Ning imploring him to send workers to the large village of A-Long, situated in an outlying part of the district, where upwards of one hundred enquirers were seeking to establish a church of their own, and badly in need of teaching.

But the hands of the Kien-Ning missionaries were already over-full, and it was hoped the American mission, working further north, in the direction spoken of by Mr. Hö, would be able to come to the rescue. And these hopes were realized, for we soon heard that a native Catechist had been sent to them from that mission.

But the plan was not successful. The enquirers, having first heard the “good tidings” from a member of the Anglican Church, and calling themselves “Anglican Christians,” held aloof from the newer converts, who, led by their teacher, worshipped in a separate building, and soon became known as the “American Church Christians”; a state of affairs which was very unsatisfactory, as we learnt from the urgent requests for a teacher which were received in Kien-Ning during the ensuing eighteen months. Then, in order to find out whether the need was really as great as these messages implied, Mr.

Phillips and Dr. Rigg spent the New Year holiday of 1900 in travelling to A-Iong and back, a journey, occupying the best part of ten days, and difficult, owing to the crossing of a high range of mountains, but through scenery so beautiful as to call forth expressions of the highest admiration from our missionaries, who spoke of one part in particular as "a veritable fairy-land."

They returned greatly pleased with all they had seen—the number of men who, having hired a house at their own expense, had fitted it up as a little church; their regular meeting together for worship; their keeping of the Lord's Day; their eagerness to learn; and the reluctance with which they parted from their two visitors, whom they loaded with parting gifts, beseeching them to "quickly, quickly come again."

These, together with other considerations, made the heads of our Kien-Ning Church feel justified in undertaking to include this new opening within their jurisdiction; though perhaps with certain misgivings, as with this fresh opportunity, the ever-present need for more workers became more terribly apparent. A need emphasized still more fully when, within the next three months, Dr. Rigg, owing to family reasons, found it necessary to go home, with only the faintest hopes of returning to China.

If it were grief to him thus to leave the work he loved, and the growth of which he had watched with such care almost from the beginning, it was a yet heavier blow to the Kien-Ning Church, and one which it was ill fitted to sustain.

"Truly we have lost our father," exclaimed Gaing-Seng as she heard the news, and we, conscious of increased weakness, felt our claim grow stronger upon the God of all power and might.

After the visit paid at New Year's time to A-Iong, it had been decided that I should go as soon as possible and spend some weeks there in teaching the enquirers' wives, some eleven of whom were already worshipping.

But interruptions of various kinds prevented the carrying out of this plan until the following June. Then, one hot morning, Gaing-Seng and I left the hospital, to travel by a shorter, though less familiar, road over the mountains, by which we were supposed to reach our destination within two days.

It led us through the village in which Meng-Ngu lived, and she, charmed to receive an unexpected visit at such an early hour, would not allow us to leave until she had cooked and we had eaten a large bowl of boiled vermicelli and fried eggs.

About four o'clock that afternoon, the steep narrow pathway we were descending was converted into a waterfall by a storm of unusual severity, which, sweeping down upon us, put an abrupt ending to our journey for that day, and we were thankful to find a small road-side inn able to accommodate us. There we spent the night, and even slept to some extent in spite of many disadvantages.

Early the following morning, having arrived at the village which should have been our destination the previous evening, we were dismayed to learn that until the swollen waters of a stream which lay across our direct path subsided, there was no way of leaving the village, for the one and only bridge had been swept away.

"Never mind," Gaing-Seng said cheerfully, "God certainly has work for us here."

And this certainly seemed to be the case, for the people, unvisited before by any foreigner, quickly crowded around us.

We immediately unpacked our baskets, which were drenched through with rain, and spread our garments to dry on the balustrades of a long bridge; but although the examination of these things excited some interest, we were by far the greater attraction.

“Have you medicines? Can you cure opium-eaters? Can you heal sickness?” were questions asked on every side. One poor woman presented a terribly ulcerated arm. “Heal it,” she pleaded, “my pain is great enough to frighten men.”

We spoke of the hospital, “Would she consent to go there?”

While considering this suggestion, a man whispered something to her, the words were passed from one to another, and in less than five minutes we were left standing alone in a deserted street, every man, woman and child having disappeared into their respective houses behind closed doors.

The whisperer had evidently spoken of dark, evil deeds practised in the hospital to which we were inviting a suffering, unsuspecting woman to go. Naturally fear arose, with the result that for a whole day and night we were left severely alone, and at day-break we were glad to find the stream low enough to ford.

Geng-Cie, my travelling servant, in the meantime had discovered an inn almost as deserted as the streets, and had managed to cook our rice; so although such an experience is exceedingly unpleasant, yet in the present instance we suffered little discomfort.

Upon the evening of the third day we arrived at A-Long, and received a reception worthy of record.

Having entered the great arched gateway, called by the heathen “Heaven’s Gate,”

probably because of the high ground on which it is situated, we looked down upon the large village lying beneath us. But we had no time for reflection, for our approach was immediately heralded by repeated cries of "A foreign woman has come, a foreign woman has come," and the people crowded out of their houses to see the sight.

I was walking, because my opium-eating chair-coolies' strength had given way a little while before, and I was reminded of countless bees swarming from hives.

Our progress down the central street was both slow and difficult. No fear was shewn, only intense curiosity. A little boy, edging his way to my side, looked up in my face and gasped "A foreign devil" in such an at-last-I-have-seen-one tone of voice, that I laughed.

"See, the foreign woman laughs; she can laugh," was the next cry.

Where were the Christians? we wondered, knowing that among the numbers of people surrounding us no Christian was present, for not only would the "peace" greeting have been given, but the face of a Christian is not like that of a heathen. The latter has an expression of heavy hopelessness; and the former witnesses to the possession of a "living hope" within.

Just as we reached the end of the long street, heavy rain beginning to fall caused an immediate disappearance of the people into their houses, to talk of the wonderful thing they had seen; while we, sheltering under an archway, were in a few moments cheered to see some four or five men coming quickly towards us.

"Peace, honourable sister, peace," they exclaimed. "Truly you must pardon the reception

given you in our village. Until yesterday, for the past ten days we have been each evening at 'Heaven's Gate' to welcome you. Your coming was delayed, and we waited for certain news."

Then leading us to the house they had fitted up as a Church, we were given into the charge of an old woman, who, seeing we were almost too tired to partake of her most kindly offered dainties, soon allowed us to retire to rest in a bedroom, which she proudly described as "The very best, and slept in by many visitors." It was a tiny place behind the worship-hall, without air, or coolness, both of which would have been most acceptable that excessively hot June night.

Had we been in doubt as to the next day being Sunday, such doubts would have been quickly dispelled, for not long after day-break we were aroused by the entrance of men into the hall outside, arranging forms and making various preparations for the coming services. And later on, when joined by others, we over-heard them, like so many Sunday School children, repeating and learning by heart, parts of the Prayer-book, prayers, and hymns.

Upon my appearance each one in turn stood to greet me with the usual "peace" salutation, while one, who evidently took the lead among his fellows, came forward to deliver rather an elaborate speech of welcome, after which he said more simply, "Now it is time to do the big worship, we will say the Prayer-book part, but we invite you to preach."

"Are there no worshipping-God women here?" we questioned. "None," was the answer, "but in Göng-Ku, a smaller place higher up the river,

there are several church-mothers who worship in a hall of their own."

And so we joined in that morning's service with over fifty men, who, although calling themselves Christians, had presumably not considered it worth their while to teach the women of their respective households.

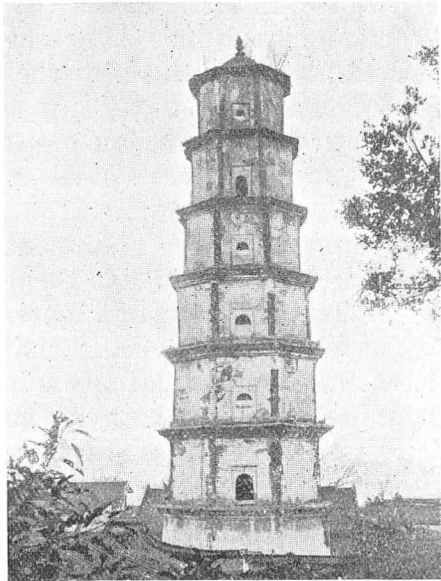
The "saying" of the Prayer-book was literally accomplished, for in a body those men stood up and loudly repeated the "Morning Prayer" from beginning to end. This was followed by my teaching—not to be dignified by the name of preaching—when I was pleased to receive most intelligent answers to my many questions, proving that the wide difference existing between the Kien-Ning and A-Iong accents was not hindering the reception of the words. But even then it seemed to us that much of their Christianity consisted in a kind of head-knowledge rather than in any change of heart; a fact which was explained when we heard of the very remarkable manner in which they had first learned to call themselves "worshipping-God men."

About two years before our visit, a great festival had been celebrated in A-Iong, consisting of much feasting and idol-honouring, when the images taken from the temples were dressed in gorgeous robes, placed in sedan-chairs and carried through the streets by multitudes of people.

The day ended, as so often happens upon these occasions, in the letting loose of evil passions, and unrestrained excitement which, taking the form of a general fight, resulted in the loss of more than one life. When the festival was over, it left consternation in A-Iong. A group of men, meeting one day in the market place, consulted together in some such words as the following :—

“There is wrong in our idol-worshipping: when we do the idols special honour, there is misfortune, there is sin; we have no power to prevent these things happening.”

All agreed to the truth of these remarks, and one among them stepped forward, and said, “When I was in Foo-Chow, one day in the street I stood listening to a native preaching a new



PAGODA IN FOO-CHOW CITY.

doctrine. He spoke words very good to hear, all about One named Jesus, Who, he said, could both save us from sin, and lead us on the road to Heaven; more than this I cannot remember.”

After further consultation it was decided that a deputation should go to Foo-Chow, seek for the preacher, and invite him to quickly come and teach his doctrine. This plan was actually

carried out. Not many weeks later, four men arrived in the huge city of Foo-Chow, diligently sought for their preacher, and found him in the person of Hö Hok-Sing, whose "gospel" is not "hid" and whose spare time is entirely spent in voluntary work for his Master. After several difficulties were overcome, he agreed to accept their unusual invitation, and travelled off to A-Iong, a journey occupying some ten days—to a people speaking a strange dialect, and with whom he could only communicate by using the classical mandarin, which is understood by the educated in all parts of China.

He stayed with them some six weeks, during which time he enrolled the names of about a hundred men as enquirers, taught the form of Christian worship, sold New Testaments, Prayer books and hymn-books, and left them rejoicing in having become the followers of a better doctrine.

It was at the close of this visit that Mr. Hö came to Kien-Ning with the request mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. It almost frightened us to think how many harvests may be spoiled for lack of reapers.

The following summer he paid A-Iong a second and shorter visit, and found some of the enquirers had relapsed into heathenism, though the greater number had followed his instructions to the letter, with various additions of their own.

So two years after the celebration of the idol festival, we came upon a band of nominal Christians, living in the midst of a huge heathen village, who had forsaken the doctrine of their fathers from deep conviction, to become believers in another religion which commended itself to them as one wherein lay power, truth and purity. And, considering the small amount of

teaching they had received, can we be surprised if to many the change was merely that of form? Many a time the words in Romans x. 2., have come to my mind as an apt description of the A-Iong believers, "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."

The service was scarcely at an end when, noticing a stirring amongst the men, we looked up to see about eight women dressed in very fine clothes and looking extremely frightened, not daring to lift their eyes from the ground, advancing towards me as I stood upon the little platform which had served as a pulpit.

"Diàn, honourable sister," some one announced, "these are the Göng-Ku church-mothers come to greet you."

Immediately we were amongst them. "Are you not going to look at your sister?" I questioned.

"Our sister!" they repeated; then gaining courage they looked at me more and more closely, exclaiming at intervals, "Truly she is our sister; listen, she speaks our words; see, she wears our dress, this is very good."

And all through my stay with them when trying to refuse strange presentations of food, "Remember," they would say, "in the first words you spoke, you said you were our sister, now you must prove it," an argument which I seldom resisted.


As there were no Christian women in A-Iong, we spoke of going to stay with them at Göng-Ku. "Stay with us," they cried in genuine surprise, "but have you not travelled from far to teach the church-uncles here? We are stupid, we are only women."

Assuring them we had come as sisters, to sisters, they joyfully said, "Let us quickly, quickly return, and make ready a room for you. To-morrow at day-break we will send a boat to bring you to us. Who could have thought it? Truly the love-heart of God is very great."

CHAPTER XV.

BINDING THE SHEAVES.

“And God divided the light from the darkness.”—*Genesis i., 4.*

HE waters of the river danced and sparkled in the early morning sun, as the boatmen cheerfully rowed us up to the little village of Göng-Ku; which, with its quaintly-shaped houses nestling under the hills, and the group of women standing on the shore to receive us, dressed in white coats and blue linen petticoats, made a scene very pleasant to look upon.

Such a joyous welcome awaited us with its often repeated “Sisters, peace, peace; sisters, peace”; and then each one tried to hold our hands, or failing them, parts of our clothing, while leading us through the streets to their “Women’s Hall.”

Not many minutes after we had arrived, they seated themselves on forms, and said, “Now, sister, do a worship.” We forthwith joined together in prayer and praise, and we soon found it was their custom, at any hour of the day, to assemble for these impromptu services.

When opportunity arose I told Geng-Cie, my servant, to see about buying some provisions.

“Sister,” exclaimed a woman, who had overheard these instructions, “what do I hear? You come from the far west country to teach us and buy your own rice! Truly we would be ashamed exceedingly; it must not be so. The plans are already arranged. There are eleven

of us, to each one in turn you are to be guests for three days; when that is finished, you must begin all over again."

Knowing this would involve too much expenditure of both time and effort, we asked them to be satisfied with our attendance at one meal in each house, and succeeded to some extent.

"But it is sad," they said, "because we have all bought pork for you." Whereupon Gaing-Seng had to tell them that neither of us ate that delicacy—usually served in solid lumps of fat and unsparing quantities of brown sugar.

"Not eat pork!" they cried. "Alas, we have nothing nice to offer you, we are ashamed." However it comforted them to hear that we liked rice and fresh vegetables better than anything else.

The prepared bed-room proving unsuitable accommodation for anyone unaccustomed to absolute airlessness, we again had occasion to sacrifice their ideas of true hospitality, by asking for the use of the loft over the little Worship-hall, already inhabited by families of pigeons and acting as the store-room for grain and jars of preserved vegetables, but possessing the luxury of a large opening in the wall which freely admitted light and air, most necessary to the foreigner when itinerating in summer.

Many of the men joined us at prayers that evening, and it was late when we separated. They possessed some knowledge of the New Testament but none whatsoever of the Old, never having so much as heard of it; while their ideas concerning our Heavenly Father, the Lord Jesus and the Holy Spirit were vague in the extreme—Beings, great and powerful, but very far away, Who demanded the homage of man-kind.

“We very much like singing hymns,” they told us, “we have now learned up to number thirty-two in the book.” It was amusing to find that the same tune was sung to all, a tune which was not in the least disturbed by metres of various lengths being suited to it! Upon hearing that each hymn possessed a tune of its own, they remarked, “Truly that is very unnecessary!”

“Diàn-sister, awake! quickly quickly awake!” And the sleeper reluctantly opened her eyes next morning, to see the light of dawn stealing through the dusty loft, and a woman standing outside her mosquito curtain, proudly holding about two pounds of raw meat in her hands. “Quickly quickly awake,” she cried, “see this meat! Truly the great God must love you. He has provided this, as you cannot eat pork. Last night a buffalo too old for further use in the plough was sold to the people of this village and killed. We have all bought some of his flesh for you.”

The poor woman's delight was so genuine, that I could not bear to spoil it by reminding her that the law of the land discountenances the slaying of these ungainly-looking animals.

For at least three days, at every meal a bowl of that buffalo-meat was placed before us, with the remark, “Eat, you must eat, it is instead of pork.”

Never before, among any company of believers, had we met with such a spirit of generous giving as prevailed in Göng-Ku. It was most refreshing. We encouraged it, and yet there were times when we had to remonstrate, but invariably we received the same response. “Sister, you are here to teach us, do not speak of money, we love to have you. It must be at our expense.”

Often, when over-whelmed with kindness and unable to express our gratitude, it comforted us to know how great their reward would be ; for in thus receiving us they were receiving Him by Whom we were sent.

“ And while we minister to thine,
We minister, O Lord, to Thee.”

Almost from the first day, we discovered three points which particularly needed most definite attention and instruction. In the very dealing with these points, we drew forth pathetic and re-iterated exclamations of, “ Why did we not know this before ? ” “ Can Jesus, Whom we have been worshipping, really do this, or be this, to us ? ” “ Alas ! we did not know, no one came to tell us.”

Yes, no one had come to tell them their need of a Saviour ; nor that prayer could be anything more than a mere repetition of words ; nor that idols were things to be abolished. But although they knew not the need of a Saviour, and in spite of their slight hold upon the merest form of Christianity, in His unutterable need of them, the Saviour held them, and kept them separate in the midst of heathenism, during the time they were waiting for a messenger to make them conscious of His Presence.

Oh the joy of bringing such as these into living touch with a waiting, loving Saviour !

“ Truly these women have no manners,” commented Gaing-Seng, upon the day after our arrival, as we saw various groups of heathen standing unnoticed near the door-way, which opened from the street into the Worship-hall, while the braver amongst them, who had ventured inside, received neither welcome nor the

customary offer of tea. "Why is it," she asked, "that you turn your backs upon these visitors, you do not even speak to them of the Lord Jesus?"

"Speak to them in our Worship-hall," they answered in tones of great surprise, "they are worshipping-idol bad people."

"But," continued Gaing-Seng, "were not we the same as they now are, before we knew of the Lord Jesus?"

"The same," they ejaculated, "not so, not so; we have never sinned; the church-uncles would not have allowed us to join the Jesus doctrine if there had been sin in our lives."

Gaing-Seng, having been under conviction of sin so long before her actual conversion, could scarcely contain herself as she listened to this statement, and I willingly left her to deal with it.

"You have no sin, truly you are happy," she remarked sarcastically. "Now tell me, have you never deceived your husbands?"

"Of course we deceive our husbands, all women do," they answered.

"And you also tell lies?"

"True, everyone tells lies."

"Then, some of you are unkind to your daughters-in-law?"

"Yes, but these things are not sin, they are not important."

On being vehemently assured to the contrary, they became really vexed, and appealed to me, "Sister, tell her it is not so."

Poor women! To be suddenly presented with truth so uncompromising, to hear that they were no better than others, was sufficient to shake the pedestal of self-satisfaction and supposed virtue, upon which they had been so confidently

standing, to its foundation, and we could not but sympathize with them in their dismay. Then, realizing the powerlessness of words to do more than throw light upon the difficulty, we most earnestly prayed that the Holy Spirit, working from within, would make their conviction of sin so real and deep, that they should above all things seek for salvation from its consequences, and claim it in true humility through the all-atoning death of Christ.

Upon the evening of the third day, when a few men and all the women were assembled for worship, this prayer was answered. The subject spoken of had been the miracle of the casting out of the Legion of devils. Thoroughly interested, they repeated the story one to the other, until familiar with every detail.

To bring a personal application to bear upon it, we suggested a possible possession of a temper, or of a lying or deceitful devil, and asked whether any among them needed that the Lord should cleanse their hearts from such devils as these?

We waited a moment. Suddenly Mrs. Diong, a woman to whom we had been attracted from the beginning—clever, and very down-right in her speech—stood up.

“Sister,” she exclaimed in a voice trembling with agitation, while the tears streamed from her eyes, “What am I to do? My whole inside is full of these devils!”

“Jesus is here,” we whispered. With one consent we all knelt down.

“Jesus, forgive my sin, forgive my sin,” she cried aloud, and then, in great simplicity, she pleaded that He, Who had cast out the devils from that man so long ago, would now do the same for her.

Two of the others joined in this prayer, and it concluded with the Chinese very beautiful rendering of our "Amen!" "This is my heart's deep wish."

An expression of absolute peace rested upon the faces of three converted women* in the hall that night, as we sang together the well-known chorus:—

"I will believe, I do believe
That Jesus died for me,
That on the Cross He shed His blood
From sin to set me free."

Never again was there any mention of "worshipping-God people" being sinless!

Both Gaing-Seng and Mrs. Diong continually quoted the words of 1 John i., verses 8 and 9, and followed them up by exhortations of the most forcible description.

New short-comings were discovered daily—the use of vile language, gambling, buying and selling on Sundays, etc. The light shining upon these and many other practices often called forth a speech uttered in tones of quiet regret. "Alas! Alas! Why did we not know this before?"

The true meaning of prayer became known to them through a very simple incident. We found that whenever they met for worship, it had been their custom to repeat, in turn, a set form of words ascribing various attributes to God. Personal petitions would have been looked upon as irreverence.

Mrs. Diong, in praying for forgiveness, had unconsciously broken through this rule, but even she reverted to it again.

So, when they told us of a believer's son who

* In the spring of 1902, the Rev. H. S. Phillips visited Gōng-Ku, and baptised these three women.

was sick unto death, and asked us to join them in "doing worship" for his recovery, we gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity that such an occasion was sure to bring, and were pleased to find they had of themselves adopted a plan common to the Christians in other places.

A large company of both men and women gathered around the room where the poor boy lay delirious, and burning with fever. The hymn sung as an opening to the service, affected him but little, for as a rule noise does not disturb a Chinese patient. Then each one in quick succession uttered the following words, "We pray to the Lord God, Heavenly Father, Great, Great God. God, higher than the Heavens, God, broader than the earth, God, deeper than the sea. God knows all things. God can do all things. God has made all things. God's power is very great. God's meaning is very deep. All men under Heaven are wicked. Send the Holy Spirit to us—Our hearts' deep wish."

"That is finished, to-morrow he may be better," they said, as, leaving the house, they lighted their torches, and escorted us through the dark, narrow streets, back to the Worship-hall.

"Tell us," we questioned, as they seated themselves for further teaching, "why no one prayed for the sick boy this evening?"

"Prayed not for him! Sister, did you not hear? We all did worship for him."

"Yes," we assented, "but you neither mentioned his sickness, nor asked the Lord to heal it."

They grasped our meaning at once.

"As children speak to their father, so the great God would have us speak to Him, you say; truly this is good to hear."

“Tell us,” asked one and another, “may I pray to God for my son? He eats opium, he is now no use.” “My daughter-in-law is undutiful, may I ask God to change her heart?” “My head always has pain, may I pray it no pain?”

And so they continued to ascertain if their several petitions were such as they might present, until like children waiting in a father's presence to receive a precious gift, they poured forth their hearts' needs, longings, and desires to Him Who is “always more ready to hear than we to pray,” rejoicing in the possession of a very wonderful—and, to them, very new—power.

There was keen excitement among the believers, when we moved into the larger and better house, secured by them for a Worship-hall, and their pleasure in obtaining it was greatly increased because it possessed an excellent loft for our use. While they were preparing it for us, we overheard some mention of wall-paper, and soon discovered that subscriptions had been made to procure this luxury, owing to the circulation of a report from Foo-Chow, crediting foreigners with the inability to sleep soundly, unless flowered paper adorned the walls of their rooms. Fortunately we were able to prevent this very thoughtful but unnecessary outlay of hard-earned money.

It troubled us greatly to find how completely our believers were in bondage to a fearful dread of the idols. “We neither worship nor touch them,” they said, “but do not speak of a destruction of them; they are powerful.”

One day, a woman, not one of the eleven believers, but one who we knew was under conviction of sin, came to us, announcing her intention of openly confessing the Lord Jesus as her Saviour.

We had been praying for this, knowing it was fear of her husband's wrath which caused her hesitation. "I cannot hide it longer," she said, "Jesus very much loves me, He has saved me; all my life I have worshipped idols, and been deceived by them, truly they are useless."

"If you know them to be useless, are you willing to put them away?" we questioned.

"Willing!" she answered, in tones of decision, "I do not want them in my house, they are the devil's things. I now belong to Jesus."

Surely, we thought, such courage on the part of a new believer, will help those who have been longer in the faith to follow her example.

"Come to my house at mid-day to-morrow," she continued, "and I will burn them all."

We accepted the welcome invitation, and also gained her consent for the others to accompany us. The announcement of this news that evening was received in silence. Evidently the proposed act was considered one of presumptuous daring; but, to please us, they all promised to attend.

Eleven frightened-looking women appeared in our hall next day at the appointed time. Urging them to help, not hinder, and longing to banish their fears, we had a short prayer-meeting before starting for the scene of action.

Arriving at our destination we were dismayed to see the poor woman also in a state of nervousness, while a large idol from the head of her guest-hall had been removed from its stand.

"Sister," she asked, hurriedly, "shall I begin now?"

"No," I answered, "your courage is small; let us pray together that God will strengthen you." Even while we were speaking the answer came.

She arose from her knees bright and very courageous.

“Have you not hidden your principal idol in the loft?” I ventured to ask.

“Yes,” she assented, “in my time of fear I hid it. That one is powerful, and has been in my family for many generations, but now I know, compared with the Lord Jesus, it has no power.”

Helped by Gaing-Seng, she brought the great image to me, and we laid it, face downwards, on a table. Then, collecting idols of every description, pictures and charms, we lighted a huge fire in the kitchen stove, and burnt them one by one. “Now the devil’s things are gone,” she announced, looking round the bare and empty walls with satisfaction.

We told her how Christians in other places hung up scrolls inscribed with words from the Holy Book. “I also will do so,” she said, producing some cash wherewith to procure them, “Then all who pass by in the street outside, will recognize my house as that of a worshipping-God person.” Then, looking at the large idol lying on the table as we had left it, she continued, “Sister, I know it has no power, but will you take it away, as I do not care to touch it?”

I agreed, but told her its fate would soon be the same as that of those she had destroyed herself.

“So much the better, so much the better,” she answered, “it belongs to the devil, not to me.”

The image, representing one of the Buddhas, was about two-and-a-half or three feet high, carved in extremely hard wood, black and shining with age. As it was both heavy and clumsy, I could only grasp it by a leg, so it was of necessity carried upside down.

What a strange procession we made as we returned through the streets to our house; a procession composed of eleven women, still frightened, slowly hobbling on their bound feet after a foreigner, whom they considered unconscious of the peril to which she was exposed, in treating a deity of such importance as she did. "Alas! Alas! Diàn-sister!" they gasped from time to time, heedless of Gaing-Seng's efforts to cheer them with hearty words of encouragement.

I placed my burden upon the topmost of three stone steps leading into the back part of our hall, while the women, having entered by the front door came through the house and stood silently looking on from within.

Too much in earnest to feel amused, I requested Mrs. Diong to go home and bring me her sharpest hatchet. Perhaps glad to escape for a little, she immediately departed, but she soon re-appeared and handed me the weapon.

Now all tongues were loosened. "Diàn-sister," they shrieked, "do not hit it, we implore you not to hit it; it will cry out, it is powerful. Sister, do not touch it."

"Listen," I answered, "stand as closely as you can to it, just away from the hatchet's swing, listen attentively, bend down to hear, tell me to stop if it utters one cry."

The scene which followed will never be effaced from my memory. Gaing-Seng, beside me, prayed aloud, while the little company above, grouped in a semi-circle, strained every nerve in anxiety to listen. The first few strokes made no impression, and then the head was severed.

"It has not cried! it has not cried!" they shouted with one accord, "Diàn-sister is right,

it has no power, we have been deceived ; it is of no use, only wood. Go on, sister, hit it hard, very much hit it—leave no bit remaining, we have been deceived.”

Very, very thankful to note this sudden change of attitude, I renewed my task with increased energy, and soon a pile of splintered wood was all that remained of the figure, with the exception of a few leaden objects which had been inside it, two of which, a Chinese character and a cone, were laughingly explained as having represented its intellect and heart.

Hot, tired and thoroughly amused, I spoke of making a fire with the remains, and boiling water for tea, but as this suggestion proved too much for their gravity or inclination, we parted in excellent spirits.

Several idol-burnings took place in Gōng-Ku that evening, and upon the following day we received numerous invitations to “Come, see my house now clean from the devil’s things,” while the men were asked to employ their spare time in writing scrolls which were to fill the vacant places.

The Christians were happy in this deliverance from their fear of evil-spirits, the oppressed had been relieved, the captives released, and there was rejoicing in “the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

Oh, how little we, who have never experienced it, can realize the cruel bondage of idol-worship ! May God help us to enter more fully into the sorrows of those who suffer from it, and to remember we are only “free to serve.”

“ . . . Then let it be

The motto of our lives until we stand

In the great Freedom of Eternity, . . .

For ever and for ever—‘Free to serve.’”

—*F. R. Havergal.*

“ . . . True Freedom is to share
All the chains our brothers wear,
And, with heart and hand, to be
Earnest to make others free ! ”—*Lowell.*

To our mutual disappointment I found it impossible to spend longer than about four weeks at Göng-Ku. “Sister,” the women pleaded, when the fact became known, “we starved before you came, now we are feasting, but we have not yet eaten full. Night and day we will pray for your return in the eighth month, when the weather may be cooler.” And I, little knowing that I should first spend two years in Ireland, promised to do so, if possible.

It is pleasant to look back on those few last days. They were eager to learn more than either teacher could impart, or pupil receive. Early and late they were with us, singly, or in companies repeating and going over former lessons, singing the new and favourite choruses, and always with the one fear in their minds—“Lest we forget.”

Farewell feasts then became the order of the day, and we grudged the time spent in the politenesses connected with them. The fame of one in particular reached us beforehand, with remarks upon the good fortune of the hostess in being able to provide such nice things for me. We like ordinary native food, but the extraordinary kind is not easily managed. Though prepared in some measure, we did not expect anything so unusual as that which appeared for the first course. It looked like pieces of black shoe-leather, floating in gravy, and in answer to our enquiry as to its real nature, we were told in triumph: “It is the flesh of a buffalo, killed at New Year’s time, five months ago!” The second course was like the first, only instead of

buffalo it consisted of fowl, black, stringy, and ancient, its death having also taken place five months before ; while the third course of river fish, of equal antiquity to its predecessors, exceeded them both in its lack of respectable preservation.

One of the later bowls contained fruit, preserved some years before. When it was placed in front of us, Gaing-Seng, unable to keep from laughing, whispered across the table, "Truly, this is a lasting dinner." Perhaps neither of us would have objected had it not lasted quite so long.

It was late when we separated on the last evening. Each woman assured me many times that instead of sleeping, she had arranged to spend the night in praying to God to give me a quick and safe journey home. We had planned to leave not later than six a.m.

About four o'clock, hearing footsteps in the street outside, I looked out of the window and saw Mrs. Diong carrying a small covered bowl.

"One of my pigeons for your breakfast," she announced. She was soon followed by others, with similar contributions, until the table was completely covered. These were succeeded by gifts for the journey, to the extent of over six dozen eggs, numerous packets of cakes, sugar-candy and dried fruits, not to mention a pair of live fowl. Fortunately it is considered excellent manners in China to receive, as it were, with one hand, and to give away with the other, so I was able to dispose of my superfluous favours in this satisfactory way.

Our parting was very sad. We knelt in prayer, but the voices were inaudible with sobbing, even Gaing-Seng, who had consented to remain behind for a while, joined in the general distress. "We

cannot bear you to go," they said, "your disciples will be without a leader; we will watch for the eighth month; then quickly, quickly return."

And so I left them. Glad because Gaing-Seng was staying to comfort and teach them; but glad beyond measure to know that in the hearts of some amongst them, the Lord Jesus now reigned as King, "a living bright Reality," their Keeper and Defender. The need of safe-keeping had increased with their growth in grace; for as "A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid," so they, by open testimony, daily brought the scorn of heathen relatives and neighbours upon themselves. And after the day of idol-burnings, threatening placards had been posted through the village. But to these not much importance was attached. "Jesus will help us, we do not fear," they said.

How true the saying is:— "Around a sleeping Church the devil walks softly, fearing to disturb the sleepers; but around a waking Church he walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." Happy are those of any nation who can say, "Blessed be the LORD my strength, . . . my high tower and my deliverer; my shield, and He in Whom I trust." (Psalm cxliv., 1-2.)

"A sure strong-hold our God is He,
A trusty shield and weapon;
Our help He'll be, and set us free
From every ill can happen.
That old malicious foe
Intends us deadly woe;
Armed with the strength of hell
And deepest craft as well,
On earth is not his fellow.

By force of ours nought could be done,
Straight were we lost for ever;
But for us fights the Righteous One,

By God sent to deliver.

Ask ye who this may be ?
 Christ Jesus named is He,
 Of Sabaoth the Lord ;
 Sole God to be adored ;

'Tis He must win the battle."—*Luther.*

My home-ward way leading through the larger village of A-Long, I joined the enquirers in their early morning worship—a company still composed of men, for, although we had visited their homes twice a week from Göng-Ku, and dawn was breaking on the darkness of some few women's hearts, yet the Light had not risen fully upon even one of them.

Then I was escorted through the streets by several friends, who, as we approached "Heaven's gate," left my sedan-chair, and hastened on ahead. Wondering why they had done this, I entered the archway, to be greeted with an outburst of singing. Touched and surprised, so as to be almost unable to respond, I passed through their midst, and out into the valley beyond. Soon we lost sight of each other, in the winding of the pathway, but for long after, I heard the sound of their deep bass voices in the still morning air, as they sang the Chinese rendering of the beautiful prayer hymn :—

"God be with you till we meet again !—
 By His counsels guide, up-hold you,
 With His sheep securely fold you ;
 God be with you till we meet again !

God be with you till we meet again !—
 'Neath His wings securely hide you,
 Daily manna still provide you ;
 God be with you till we meet again !

God be with you till we meet again !—
 When life's perils thick confound you,
 Put His loving arms around you ;
 God be with you till we meet again !"


Every word they sang found an answering echo in my heart, and earnestly I prayed that our Father would indeed "put His loving arms around these sheep and keep them securely folded until we all meet

"At Jesus' Feet."

CHAPTER XVI.

TOIL AND SURE REWARD.

“Lo, all these things doth God work . . . with a man, . . . that he may be enlightened with the light of life.—*Job xxxii., 29-30* (*RV., mg.*)

WING to the wealth of prayer ascending from Göng-Ku for my well-being, the return journey to the hospital was accomplished in two days without any mishaps.

One little incident on the way is worthy of record as an illustration of heathen blindness to nature's loveliness.

Near the summit of a mountain I was ascending on foot, the air, already balmy and soft, became deliciously sweet. Pressing on to discover the cause, I came upon a scene so wonderful as to draw forth my exclamations of intense delight. The ground at my feet, and as far as the eye could reach, was literally white with lilies, growing up tall and straight, through luxuriant ferns.

“Look around,” I said to the coolies. “Such as this I never saw before.”

“You are looking at the white flowers,” they replied. “Yes, the roots are good to eat.”

My raptures were silenced. It had been foolish to expect appreciation from men whose eyes were Christless.

I waited awhile on that table-land before descending to the valley beneath, and thought how good must have been the garden which “the Lord God planted.”

In this month of June disturbing accounts of the “Boxer movement” first reached us. We

had known of it before, as causing trouble in Northern China ; but now a spirit of unrest made itself felt all over the country. Foo-Chow was visited by a party of Boxers speaking "great swelling words of vanity," and doing their utmost to obtain a following of marauders, and rumours were afloat concerning both native Christians and foreigners.

Such was the condition of affairs, necessitating the recall to Foo-Chow of all missionaries from up-country stations. Just then, in the words of the Report of the Church Missionary Society, 1901, "a terrible disaster visited the (Fuh-Kien) Province, and seems in the providence of God to have been a powerful deterrent to the carrying out of the designs of certain men who might otherwise have attempted to disturb the peace. In the month of June the River Min, which flows through the centre of the Province, rose to a height which had not been known for upwards of a hundred years. This occurred on the very day which, according to rumour, had been fixed for an attack on foreigners, whether local or general is not known."

There was a mighty flood, and cruel in its devastation. When the waters subsided, only two-fifths of the houses in Kien-Ning city remained standing, the streets looked like vast rubbish heaps, roofs, timber, flagging, every description of household furniture, idols, and all sorts of utensils, lay in a hopeless jumble, filling up thoroughfares which a very few days before, had been thronged with busy people who little thought that the morrow would not be the same as to-day. The scene was one of utter desolation, people homeless, hungry and sorrowing for relatives suddenly swept away ; for it was

estimated that at least six hundred lives were lost and fifteen hundred houses destroyed.

On Tuesday, the twenty-sixth of June, heavy rains set in. By Wednesday morning the river had risen to a considerable height. Towards evening, over-flowing the banks, it reached the wall of our compound, which collapsed the following day with a sudden crash, and the water literally poured in, almost reaching the steps of the men's hospital. In a very short time the patients were removed to the women's hospital, which became a veritable ark of refuge from that moment, for the villagers from below, when driven out of their flooded houses, came to us for safety, bringing with them their pigs and fowls, their cows, goods and chattels, until every available space was occupied.

It would be difficult to give an accurate description of the night which followed. The noise of streaming rain and rushing water, the crashing of falling walls, the thunderous roar, when the men's large hospital gave way, and, in its slow, heavy fall, seemed to shake the very ground upon which our own house stood.

"As they that watch for the morning," so did we look unto the King Who "sitteth upon the flood."

With the first streak of dawn came the welcome news "The great water is abating, the flood has turned."

But our experiences were as nothing in comparison with the misery endured by thousands in the city and surrounding villages. To them the night became a turmoil of indescribable horrors. Old men, women and little children, when the waters streamed through their houses, climbed for safety to the lofts, and, when the waters reached them there, clambered out upon

the roofs, clinging to them for hours in blackest darkness, streaming rain, and with the continual crash of falling walls and houses on every side.

The water flowing over the city walls, the following morning boats were engaged by the mandarins to go through the streets and take people from the roofs, to which they had clung all night. But the supply of boats being insufficient, many families perished while waiting for deliverance by the collapse of their houses.

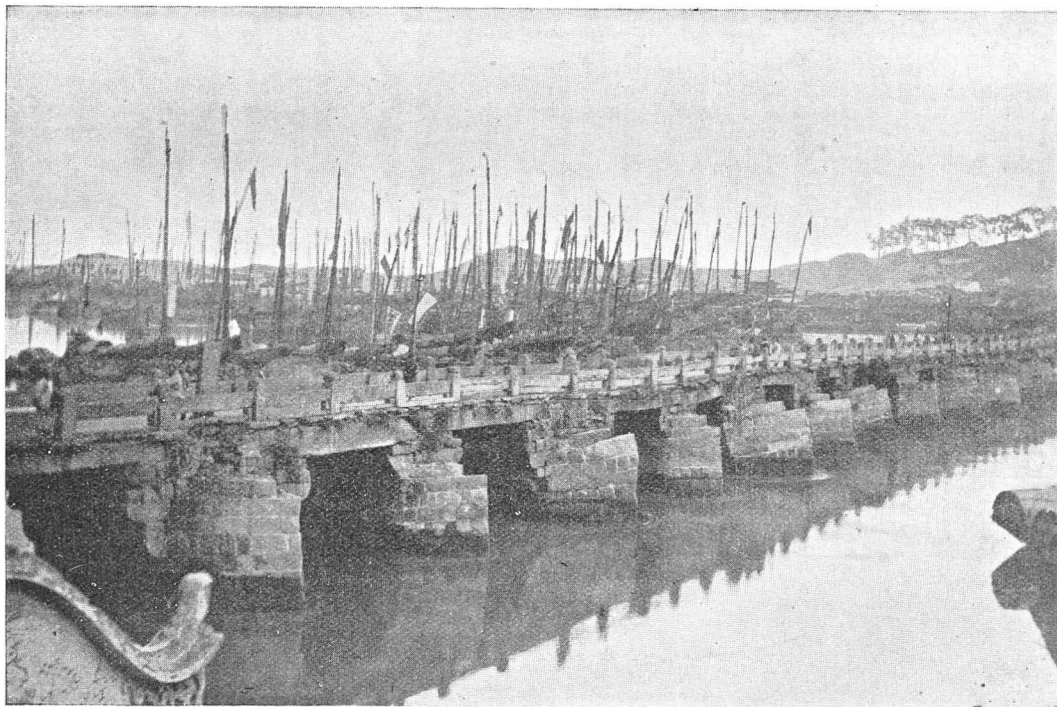
In one place upwards of two hundred women and children, who had been brought to a temple so as to be under the idols' protection, were crushed to death as the building fell in upon them.

Deep thankfulness prevailed when it was ascertained that the lives of all the Christians had been spared, not a few having taken refuge in our C.E.Z.M.S. City house, which, standing on high ground, remained unharmed.

Then the great flooded river, its work finished in Kien-Ning, swept down to the sea, a powerful, destructive, resistless force, reaching a climax in Foo-Chow, where hundreds of lives were lost, and the famous bridge of "Ten Thousand Ages" was broken by the tumultuous rush of mighty waters.

As soon as navigation was possible once more, obeying the summons to Foo-Chow, received before the flood had occurred, we started upon the down-ward journey, with much to sadden us; for not only were we indefinitely leaving our district, work and people—war having already been declared in the North—but the wreckage and ruined buildings all along the banks of the river were appalling.

Nang-Wa had suffered considerably, Yen-Ping, through being magnificently situated, close to the



THE BRIDGE OF "TEN THOUSAND AGES," FOO-CHOW.

water but rising almost perpendicularly above it, escaped with but little damage. While there we gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity of visiting the hospital, sure of a welcome from the doctor, Mr. Ngoi Ngiong-Gi, the Catechist, Su, and their respective wives. It was a pleasure to see Mr. and Mrs. Ngoi together. "I really believe they love each other!" Gaing-Seng remarked once, in tones of surprise, "He treats her so well, and she brings him tea when he is thirsty."

Mutual love is a condition of things so unusual in China as to be a subject of general comment when it occurs.

Mr. and Mrs. Su have the honour of possessing little twin girls, known as "Ma-ti-nga" (May) and "Su-sa-na," (Susanna)—the latter so called because, as the father explained, he had only to add a "Sa-na" to his surname "Su," and the Biblical name of "Susanna" was complete!

To heathen parents, the birth of twin girls would have been considered an extreme misfortune, to be immediately followed by infanticide; so that little "Ma-ti-nga" and "Su-sa-na," unconsciously teach a lesson of Christian behaviour, and, by their very existence, are a strong plea against the terribly prevalent custom of infanticide. And it may safely be stated that they are the only twin girls living to-day in the Prefecture of Kien-Ning.

When we arrived in Foo-Chow things were decidedly critical. Assembled once more on the Ku-Liang Mountains, rumours of the most alarming description reached us daily, sometimes of terrible massacres enacted in North China, sometimes of preparations for the same in the city beneath us. It was a trying time. Danger at hand, and yet intangible.

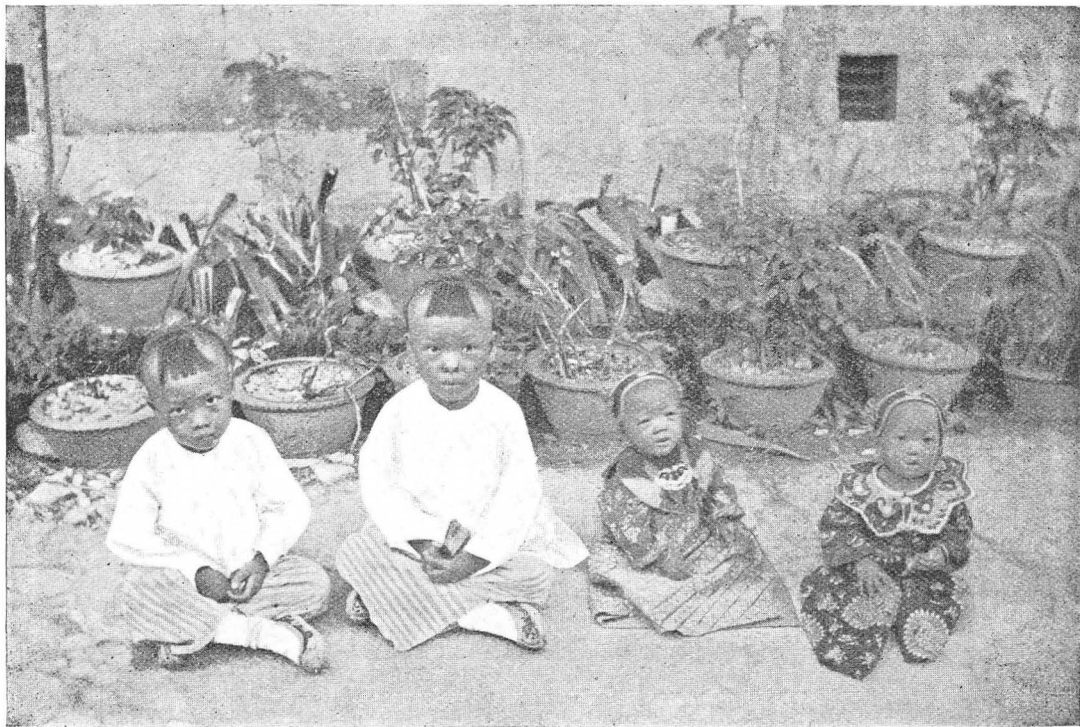
About a fortnight had passed in this manner, when a cable message was received from our C.E.Z.M.S. Home Committee, ordering an instant withdrawal from the Province. Some of us then came home on furlough, and others spent the necessary waiting-time in Hong-Kong, Singapore, and Japan.

From that date until the following February practically the whole mission was left without European supervision, except such as could be exercised by correspondence and by occasional visits of Chinese Christians to Foo-Chow, or, in one or two instances, brief visits of Europeans to the Stations.

In the despatch wherein the Chinese *Tao-tais* intimated their assent to the missionaries returning to the up-country stations, they said, "We are greatly desirous for the speedy return of the missionaries, their intention being to exhort men to do right." The fidelity of the officials to the engagements they made with the foreign Consuls should be noted with gratitude. Under God, the safety of the Europeans in Foo-Chow was entirely in their hands."

The Rev. Ll. Lloyd wrote in December :—

"We have been and still are, humanly speaking, entirely in the hands of the Chinese officials, and we have realized as never before how literally true it is that the hearts of those in authority 'are in God's rule and governance,' and that He disposes and turns them as it 'seemeth best to His godly wisdom.' The officials have dared to disobey the command which undoubtedly came to them, to destroy all foreigners within their jurisdiction, and they have done this at the peril of their lives, and we feel our indebtedness to them."



THE LITTLE TWIN GIRLS AND THEIR BROTHERS.

In a still later letter he tells the following reassuring news concerning the state of the native Church :—

“ Notwithstanding hostile murderous threats and wild rumours, the great mass of baptized converts have remained firm, though here and there a few have been shaken from their faith, at least for a time, and walk no more with us. We hear of some not daring to come to Church until the muttered curses which assailed them in the highways had passed away; of widespread attempts to compel contributions to idol-festivals and idolatrous processions; of houses wrecked, and of converts ostracized because they refused to pay these idol-dues; of stones thrown violently into Church premises with the hope of their hitting some one within.

“ This is the darker side of the shield. Thank God there is a brighter one! We are told of increased contributions by the native Christians even where plague has been rampant and famine has threatened; of large accessions to the Church in various places, notwithstanding the hostile attitude assumed by many towards everything Christian; of nearly a thousand added to the Church by baptism during the year; of a Chinese Mandarin asking the permission of his superiors to present a tablet to one of our native Clergy extolling his goodness and virtue.” *

“ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.” (Romans viii., 25.)

Kien-Ning City now lies open to us. Ever since missionary work was started in the Prefecture the aim of our missionaries has been to gain this entrance. For the attitude of the people through-

* C.M.S. Report, 1901.

out the entire district towards the foreigners and native Christians is controlled by the reception they meet with within the walls of the capital.

This goal is obtained, but what if through lack of forces, through lack of means, we fail to retain it ?

With increased opportunities, the staff is reduced. Dr. Rigg at home and the Rev. W. C. White transferred to Lo-Nguong. Also, in order to maintain existing work in the most important



THE NEW CHURCH IN KIEN-NING CITY.

and central place, the Rev. H. S. Phillips has had to move from the City of Kien-Yang, leaving that hardly-gained station in charge of ladies (C.M.S.) and native Christians ; while he, continuously travelling from end to end of the district, has begun to build his headquarters' house in Kien-Ning city. Here also, we hope soon to establish both the men's and women's Hospitals. For the former, a site has been purchased by the

C.M.S.; for the latter, our C.E.Z.M.S. house, bought as a memorial to the Rev. J. S. Collins, is already in process of adaptation.

Four times have God's messengers been forced to flee for their lives from this city, where now they may not only build their own houses and hospitals, but where daily services are held in a new Church, which stands in the place of the one destroyed in the riot of 1899, and which was dedicated not long since to the God, with Whom "all things are possible."

"Who will bring me into the strong city?
Who will lead me into Edom?
Wilt not Thou, O God?"—*Psalms lx., 9, 10.*

"For from of old men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen a God beside Thee, Which worketh for him that waiteth for Him." (Isaiah. lxiv., 4.)

There is need for earnest prayer on behalf of this mission. The workers, lamentably few, are straining every nerve to keep pace with the demands of a growing church. Hindering barriers of superstitious fear have still to be taken away, and difficulties abound.

Oh, may the love of Christ constrain us to think, care, pray, give and do far more in the future than any of us have ever done in the past!

"The love of Christ"—a yearning love, deep beyond human comprehension—a love which behoved Him to suffer, and to "pour out His soul unto death," for the joy set before Him of winning the souls of a lost creation back to God.

May this thought of His love, His sufferings, His longing for those still lying in darkness, urge us to take our full share, whatever that may be, in hastening the time when "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied."

There was a prayer-meeting one evening in Ciong-Bau. The Christians were speaking of the Lord's second coming. "Why is it," they asked, "that the Lord Jesus is so long in returning, when three times in the last chapter of our Holy Book He says 'I quickly, quickly come?'"

In answer, we read together the ninth verse of the third chapter of St. Peter's second Epistle: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise . . . but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

"True," they assented, "He is waiting until all His chosen ones are gathered in. How glad our Jesus will be when the last one is saved!"

The thought, that of necessity there must be a last one, in order to complete the number of those who accept Christ's all-embracing invitation to come to Him, was commented on in various ways, until the further thought suggested itself—

"What if that 'last one' be in this village, or near at hand?"

"Yes," exclaimed Mrs. Eng-Nu, in great excitement, "perhaps here in Ciong-Bau, who can tell, and perhaps one amongst us, sitting now in this room, may be used by God to bring that last soul to the Saviour! Then, oh great, great joy! Our Jesus will come!"

"This Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His foot-stool." (Heb. x., 12-13.)

"He is waiting with long patience
For His crowning day,
For that kingdom which shall never
Pass away.

“ Shall we—dare we—disappoint Him ?
Brethren, let us rise,
He who died for us is watching
From the skies.”

“ Work, for the Lord is coming !
Children of light are we ;
From Jesus' bright appearing
Powers of darkness flee.
Out of the mist, at His bidding,
Souls like the dew are born :
O'er all the east are spreading
Tints of the rosy morn.”