

The City of the
Iron Hill

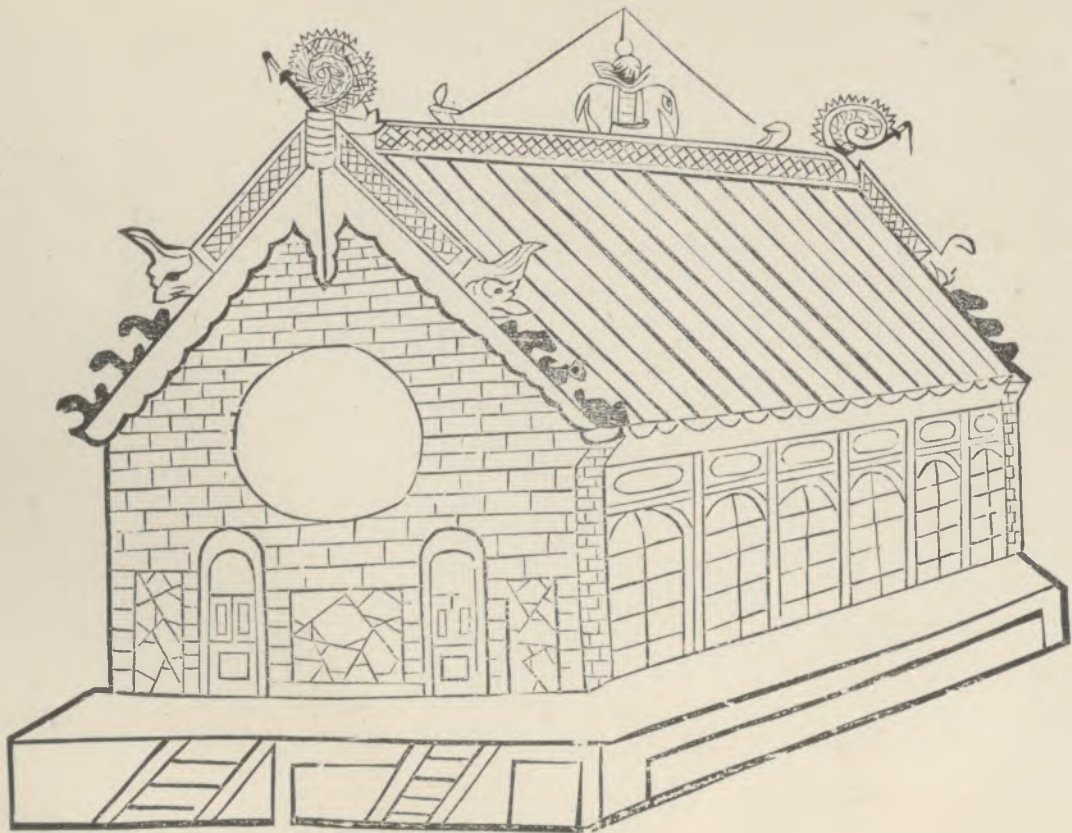
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REV. JAMES WEBSTER

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TIELING CHURCH.

(By a Native Artist.)

THE CITY OF THE IRON HILL

A Gospel Triumph in Manchuria

BY

REV. JAMES WEBSTER

PAISLEY

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PREFACE.

I HAVE been asked by Mr. Webster to write a preface to the graphic and interesting story of "The City of the Iron Hill." My only qualification for the task is that I spent some weeks in Manchuria two years ago, when I had the opportunity of seeing several of the cities where mission work is conducted, and of making the acquaintance of many of the converts.

Manchuria is little known to Europeans. It is situated outside the Great Wall of China, between Mongolia and Korea, and is connected with the outer world by the treaty port of Newchwang. Ships from many nations carry merchandise to and from this port, but few foreigners, except missionaries, have visited the interior, and none others reside in any of the inland cities.

The City of the Iron Hill is a typical Manchu city. Its massive walls, its busy streets, its conspicuous temples, are characteristic of the country, and the conditions of life and bearing of the people are also representative of other cities.

The various steps from darkness to light, depicted in the story, show the difficulties experienced in introducing the gospel to a people who are in entire ignorance of it,

and the marvellous way in which these difficulties by God's blessing disappear. Ignorance rouses to opposition, opposition gives place to sufferance, sufferance leads to acceptance. This has been the joyous experience of the Manchurian missionaries and native agents in the various cities and villages where they have laboured.

The converts in Tieling are desirous to erect a church in that city, and set a worthy example by endeavouring to accomplish their purpose without seeking aid from mission funds. The profits derived from this book will, by Mr. Webster's instructions, be devoted to the church building fund.

This little book will further accomplish its purpose, if those who read it are led to take a deeper interest in the progress of missions in heathen lands, and specially in Manchuria, where Mr. Webster and his fellow-missionaries of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, along with those of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, have had the great joy of not only planting the gospel seed, but of seeing the fruits of their labours in the large number of converts, who have within a few years been added to the Church.

DUNCAN M'LAREN.

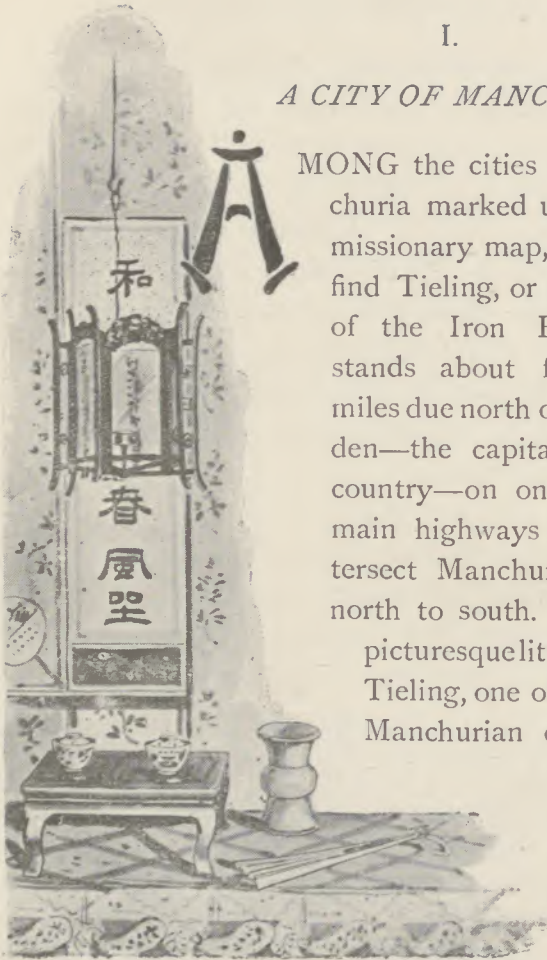
EDINBURGH, *December 1894.*

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. A CITY OF MANCHURIA,	I
II. FIRST THINGS,	11
III. THE CHAPEL SACKED,	22
IV. PREACHING FROM THE WINDOW SILL,	28
V. SEEKERS AFTER GOD,	38
VI. FIRST-FRUITS OF BLESSING,	47
VII. THE DEEPENING OF SPIRITUAL LIFE,	56

I.

A CITY OF MANCHURIA.

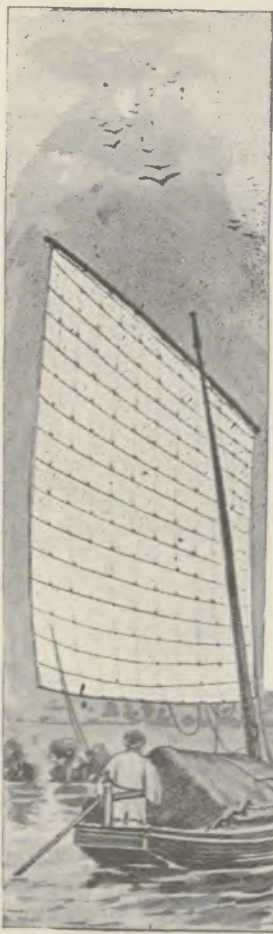


MONG the cities of Manchuria marked upon our missionary map, you will find Tieling, or the City of the Iron Hill. It stands about forty-five miles due north of Moukden—the capital of the country—on one of the main highways that intersect Manchuria from north to south. A very picturesque little city is Tieling, one of the few Manchurian cities to whom nature has dealt kindly in the

matter of environment ; river, hill, and dale all lending themselves to make the situation beautiful. At the extreme end of a great plain, stretching south-west all along the basin of the river Liao—a long unbroken level of over two hundred miles—the city forms a sort of connecting link between Mongolia on the one hand and the highlands of Manchuria on the other. On the east side, the first slopes of the great range of mountainous country, of which eastern and north-eastern Manchuria consists ; and on the west and north-west, the low outer ridges of the Mongolian hills.

About a mile to the west of the city is the river Liao, flowing southward from its sources in the distant recesses of north-west Mongolia. This river is the great waterway between the city and the sea, and in the open season—from the beginning of April till the end of October—one of the most picturesque features of the landscape is a long line of white sails passing up and down the river, trading between Tieling and the port of Newchwang, a hundred and fifty miles away.

Beyond the north gate of the city is another river,



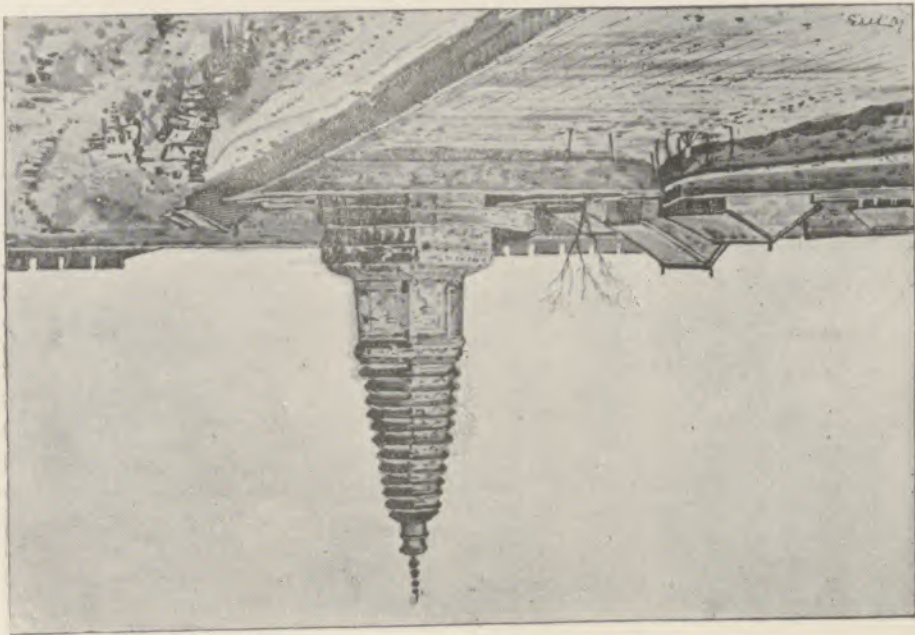
the T'sai, shallow, broad, and clear, flowing westwards from its source at the head of a long and beautiful valley. Bending round the base of the Dragon Peak, a bold cliff east of the city, topped by a tower and temple in honour of the Dragon King, this beautiful sparkling stream, almost immediately it leaves its mountain channel, loses itself in the dull deep waters of the Liao—the river of the plain. In the angle of these two rivers the city of Tieling is built.



About the city itself there is little to distinguish it from any other town of the like size in North China. It is four square—as near as may be—is surrounded by a massive brick wall forty feet in height, topped with curious oriental battlements, four great gates with decrepit-looking towers overtopping them, narrow guttery streets lined with shops, the counters of which are all open to the street, curious sign-boards suspended lengthwise from the eaves, and bearing in letters of gilt the most pretentious of titles, such as “The Hall of Heavenly Abundance,” “The Perpetual Fountain,” “The Exuberant Grove,” and similar extravagant *noms de plume*.

At the crossing of the street is a handsome drum tower, which is said to mark the last resting-place of a famous warrior of the Ming dynasty. Near by is the county court-house, or Yamên, within whose precincts the district magistrate, or “*chih hsien*,” presides from day to day, dispensing celestial justice, and increasing riches thereby. Here and there throughout the city you come upon temples to various popular divinities—the god of war, the goddess of mercy, or the god of fire; and in

Old Pagoda.



the north-west corner of the city, the lion-guarded gates of a Buddhist temple, in close proximity to a fine old pagoda dating from the Tang dynasty, and having, therefore, a history of over a thousand years.

Long ago the City of the Iron Hill was known by the name of *Yinchow*, or the silver burgh. And in those days, before the iron age began, when the faith of Buddha was comparatively youthful in China, there must have been some devout and wealthy devotees in this particular region, whose religious zeal found expression in rearing lofty piles in honour of the sage; for in other parts of Manchuria there are several of those interesting memorials of an ancient faith that is now dead, but which was once alive and full of vigour.

Very striking and picturesque is this old pagoda within the city, standing out as it does in noble grandeur amid the painfully monotonous rows of low, bald, tile-roofed dwellings surrounding it; towering up, tier above tier—thirteen in number—two hundred feet from the ground, a massive molten censer surmounting it, and its apex a ball of pure gold. It is Buddhist, of course, and busts

of the immortal sage are to be seen standing out in relief all over it ; but, strange to say, the gentle old monk, who with the greatest courtesy showed us over the sacred precincts, was himself a Taoist, and a professed disciple of Laotze.

Outside the city walls, large and busy suburbs have grown up with the years, and between the city and suburbs, Tieling has a large and ever-increasing population. For it has the reputation of being prosperous above most cities in the province, its proximity to the river of the plain making it a convenient centre, from which to export the produce of the wide and fruitful country around.

Some say the people number thirty thousand ; others, there cannot be less than a hundred thousand, and the truth probably lies somewhere between.

In mid-winter of 1884, Mr. Ross and I set out from Moukden for the purpose of prospecting the district north of that city, with a view to further develop the work of the mission in that direction. Up till then, Moukden had been the extreme northern limit of our missionary operations in Manchuria. Beyond that city nothing had been done, and we knew of but one or two converts in all the

wide region beyond. In the course of our journey, we found ourselves one Sabbath day at a village hostelry, about as far beyond Tieling as that city is from Moukden. We went there to visit a Christian man of whom we had heard, in the hope of meeting him and spending the Sabbath with him. Our friend was from home, so we spent the hallowed hours alone, with no one to join us in our worship. In the evening we walked abroad, along the village street, and out into the country beyond, climbing a little knoll, from the top of which we could see far and wide across the plain. It was winter, fresh snow had fallen over night, the sky was clear and cold. The whole landscape from verge to verge of the horizon was shrouded in dazzling snow. Here and there all over the wide plain, black circles appeared in the snow, large circles and small. They were the wooded plots, gean-trees, pine-trees, and willows surrounding the habitations of the plain. Not a cloud in all the blue, not a speck on all the landscape, only those black patches! And, as we gazed, we thought of the countless thousands of immortal souls, crowded within those dark circles, living out their low, mean, sordid lives from day to day, sin-

ning, suffering, and dying, all ignorant of the God of love, and without a ray of hope of a better life in a better land. It was as if God in His providence had brought us to that knoll, and had given us a vision, as He brought Ezekiel to the valley of dry bones and gave him a vision ; and we returned to our humble lodging, oppressed in spirit by the thought of that countless multitude still in darkness and the shadow of death, of the necessity that was laid upon us, and of the seeming hopelessness of the task. "Can these bones live?" was the question of our hearts ; and what could we say? It did seem, to the eyes of sense, a very unlikely thing. All we could say was, "O Lord, thou knowest!"

It was thus, and then, that the resolution was formed to begin mission work in this region, and Tieling was chosen as the basis of operation.

And now I wish to tell the story of how Christianity was first planted in the city of Tieling, and how from small beginnings in what seemed at first a very hard and unkindly soil, and amid influences all unfriendly to its growth, the plant of grace has grown from year to year, until now it has become a goodly tree.

II.

FIRST THINGS.



T

HE beginning of the work in Tieling was a natural development of the mission work, carried on in our southern stations for more than a dozen years previous to the time of which I write. It was but another link in a chain, the other links of which had been already forged during years of patient toil by our first missionaries in Manchuria — Messrs. Ross and Macintyre.

The man who was the means of opening the door for us in Tieling was himself one of the fruits of those early years. He was named *Chiao*, a man of between fifty and sixty years of age. Of venerable appearance, and a mild and kindly aspect, Old Chiao was withal a humble and sincere Christian—one of those sinners saved by grace, who love much because they have been forgiven much. He was already old and worn when Christ came to him, and he bore about in his body the marks of long years' indulgence in the opium vice. In former times he had occupied a good position, was a man of wealth, as wealth goes in China, and held in high esteem in his native village. But bit by bit the fell habit into which he had drifted blighted all, and left him in his premature old age poor and friendless, a ruin in body and soul.

But there came to this old man a great longing to be free from the thrall. He would fain have given up the evil habit: he tried again and again, but only tried to fail. And at last he gave up what seemed a vain attempt, and in helpless despair threw himself on his couch, trimmed his

little lamp, and drawing his opium pipe to him, abandoned himself to the unrestrained indulgence of the unhallowed passion. It happened one day when he was thus engaged, that a wayfarer dropped into the roadside inn where Old Chiao was staying. The stranger seemed to be about the same age as himself, tall, sallow-complexioned, grave. The two men entered into conversation.

"I see you eat the great smoke, my brother," remarked the stranger. "You know that the great smoke is evil, and Kung the master says, as thou knowest, '*Fei li puh shing*,' refrain from evil."

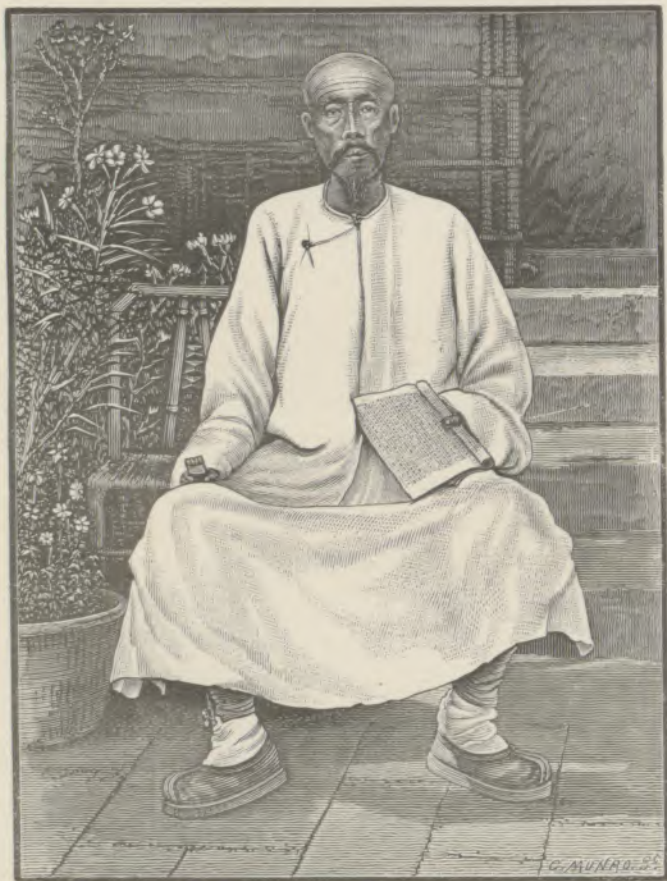
Old Chiao, raising himself upon his elbow, with a sad despairing look in his opium-stricken countenance, replied :

"What you say is right and true. I know that it is a bad thing, and that it is destroying my body, killing me by inches. Oh how glad I would be if I could give it up. But I have eaten the big smoke so long, it is useless to speak of it. The thing is an utter impossibility. *Mei-yiu-fadstü*. I have no means, and there is no hope for me."

The two men had been sitting at opposite sides

of the room, but now the stranger rose from the k'ang, and walking over to the other side, seated himself beside the old debauchee, and looking at him with eyes brimful with compassion, and in tones tremulous with earnestness, began to speak to him.

“Brother,” he said, “look at me! You must not think or say again what you have now said to me. Is there no hope for you, my brother, and must you remain for ever in this terrible bondage? Listen! Once I was as you are, and I thought and spoke of myself as you think and speak of yourself now. Not many years ago the cursed opium habit held me in its iron grip. My whole soul was enslaved by it. It forced me to give up everything for the love of it. I forsook my aged mother, my wife, and little children to follow after it. I knew the evil of it, and often struggled with it, and spurned it from me, only to fall back again more in love with it than ever. So it was with me until”—and here the speaker rose to his feet, his eye flashing, his voice eloquent with enthusiasm—“UNTIL THE GREAT DELIVERER CAME. *He*



OLD WANG.

burst my bonds and let me go free, and my Deliverer can do the same for you, my brother! You must go to Him." There was, at that time at least, only one man in all Manchuria who could speak as this man spoke, and that man was *Old Wang*, the first Manchurian convert, and the *facile princeps* of Manchurian preachers, the man who was the means of winning so many for Christ in his short day that he has been called the founder of Protestant Christianity in Manchuria.* The wayfarer was none other than he. To an opium-smoking victim, struggling for deliverance, no human being was half so fit as Old Wang to counsel and guide. He had been through the hottest of that fire; and he went on to tell how deliverance had come to him, as he came to know the true God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; how he prayed to Him out of the depths with strong crying and tears. When on his knees there came divine strength to his soul, and after three days and nights of agony, he went forth for ever free.

* "Old Wang," by Rev. John Ross.

It was the beginning of an intercourse between the two men which ended in the conversion of Old Chiao. But he too, like his master, had a long and weary battle to fight with the opium, and he came out of his conflict with a spirit wonderfully chastened, a faith simple as a child's, and a heart burning with love for his fellow-men, and desire that they might be saved.

When he heard that it was proposed to send him to Tieling to preach the gospel, his joy was boundless. "What grace!" he said. To think that the Lord Jesus had not only saved him after his whole life had been spent in evil, but was even pleased to use him in His holy service!

And so, trudging along the dusty road, with his pack of gospels on his back, and a long staff in his hand, resting his weary limbs at this and that roadside inn, having a word in season for all, sowing by the wayside the seeds of the kingdom, lifting up his heart in prayer to God for help, as well he might, Old Chiao, the converted opium-smoker, went forth alone to plant the standard of the cross in this old heathen city.

On his arrival in Tieling, he at once began to preach in the market-place, and to sell his books. At first little notice would be taken of the old man. The passers-by, if they noted him at all amid the crowd of noisy hucksters, would conclude that he was merely "a seller of songs, who would have some difficulty in earning his rice at the trade." Some who stood to listen, when they heard that the books were of a religious nature, and only five cash a copy out of the sheer love of a bargain, innate in every Chinaman, would pick out the five most beggarly cash on their string, get a gospel or small book in return, and there in most cases their interest in the matter ended. Some who bought a gospel would probably make little sense of it, for there was no interpreter; others purchased "The Two Friends," an interesting little book—a dialogue between a heathen and his Christian friend—by one of the early Chinese missionaries, Dr. Milne; and if they read it at all, they would learn some of the ground truths of the Christian religion. One or two with whom he held converse in the market-place befriended him, and to

them he expressed the desire to hire a small house—a “book-shop” he called it—to save the explanations that would have been necessary if he had called it a chapel or “guild hall.” One was offered him, and negotiations were well-nigh completed when the foreigner’s connection with the transaction had to be divulged. That was an ominous factor in the case; negotiations were at once postponed, never to be resumed. The same obstacle rendered him unsuccessful again and again. It was not himself nor his books, nor his doctrine, that stood in the way; it was the foreigner’s connection with them all. He would have had no difficulty whatever in renting a house for himself, to do in it pretty much what he pleased; but for the foreigner, the alien, never! Who could tell what evil he might be bent upon. No money would induce most men in those days to dare such a thing. It is the same in the beginning of work in almost every place. And then the Literati—the scribes and pharisees of the city—came to know of his movements; and they said in effect to every householder in Tieling, “If you rent a house

to this emissary of the foreign devil, you are not Cæsar's friend."

At last he met a man with sufficient character, or sufficient lack of reputation rather, who was willing, for the sake of gain, to brave all obloquy, and rent him a house—a miserable little hovel in a side street. It had been used as an opium den of the lowest type : its roof was leaky, and it was dilapidated every way ; but it was the only place to be had then, and the old man was glad of any corner he could call his own, where he could quietly speak to men about Christ. It was our first chapel in Tieling. When better days dawned upon us, and the rough edges of prejudice wore off, we moved to a more suitable place in a better locality, and the old house reverted to its original type, and remains so to this day. But one never passes that wretched hovel in the side street where the two little red flags hang over the doorway, the well-known sign of the opium den, without reflecting that for a few months at least it was devoted to the highest service, and that from within its walls, first sounded forth the word of life in Tieling.

III.

THE CHAPEL SACKED.



THE long fierce Manchurian winter passed away, and the spring of 1885 came round, bringing with it warm southern breezes; and the land which had been ice-bound for four long weary months, was now released.

The farmers were busy in the fields from morn till nightfall. The river of the plain was alive once more with hundreds of sails plying up and down from Tieling to the sea. The eastern hills were clad in a lovely green, and buttercups and marigolds bloomed on marsh and meadow.

In the end of April, Mr. Ross went eastward, to visit the Corean valleys on the banks of the Yalu, where a wonderful work of grace had been going on for months among the Corean settlers in some mountain valleys there. It was my privilege to accompany him, and see with my own eyes that truly wonderful movement.

We started on our homeward journey towards the end of May, our intention being to return by the way of Tieling, and open the newly rented chapel. We had already arranged with Old Chiao to have the chapel repaired and everything in readiness for inaugurating the work. So we made a detour, travelling in a north-west direction over a mountainous country for more than 160 miles. It was a difficult journey; the roads were bad, the inns execrable hovels, few and far between, and we frequently had a stretch of six or eight hours in the saddle under a burning sun.

We looked forward to our visit to Tieling with grave anxiety. Serious questionings arose in our minds as we slowly rode along the mountain side, as to what would happen. Some things we knew

were inevitable ; there would be crowds ; thousands would come about us during our stay. Sheer curiosity to see the foreign devil would bring them. They would stare at us, press upon us, pester us with all manner of silly questions about our age, the price of our boots, whether we cultivated the ground in our country or not, and so forth. We would hear unspeakable epithets applied to us as we walked along the streets, irritating, tantalising in the highest degree. All that, we were prepared for : it was a small matter. But the question was, would they go no further ? Would they listen to us as we came to tell them of the Christ ? Would they tolerate us, coming into their midst with what to them was nothing else than an alien religion, whose aim was to uproot and supplant that which they held most dear ? At least so they would think, and thinking thus, how could we expect them to take us to their hearts ? We felt as if we were about to walk over a sheeting of thin ice, and could only hope it would bear our weight.

At last we emerged from the mountains, and reached the highway on the plain, about eight

miles south of Tieling. We rested for an hour or two at a village inn before riding into the city. As we were about to leave, some travellers came into the inn, and catching a glimpse of us in the inner room, began to talk in whispers to the landlord. We could hear that we were the subject of conversation, and some things they said were not reassuring. They spoke of a house that had been rented by foreigners, of crowds of people, and a riot. Fearing the worst, we mounted our ponies and rode off as quickly as possible. An hour's ride brought us to the city gate. Our appearance was the signal for the gathering of a crowd, which grew in numbers as we rode through the streets, until by the time we reached the chapel, we were in the midst of an immense concourse of people, who were evidently anything but friendly. Dismounting, we pressed our way through the dense crowd, and got inside the chapel. It was as we feared. The house had been sacked, and Old Chiao had fled in mortal fear. We learned from the neighbours the facts of the case. After the renting of the house, and it becoming known that

it was to be a chapel for the preaching of the religion of Jesus, people came daily in large numbers demanding admittance, and abusing the old man in no measured terms for daring to introduce the "devil's doctrine," as they called it, into their midst. He had borne their abuse patiently, and from morning till night answered the questions of the rude mob, and explained the meaning of the chapel being opened. At last the mob had broken out into open riot, smashed doors and every breakable article they could lay their hands on, turned bibles and hymn books into the middle of the street, and burned them, and finally attacked Old Chiao in the most brutal manner. All this happened on the day previous to our arrival, and fearing another attack, Chiao had gone off in the middle of the night, utterly exhausted with the nervous strain through which he had passed, in his brave attempt to hold the fort until we arrived.

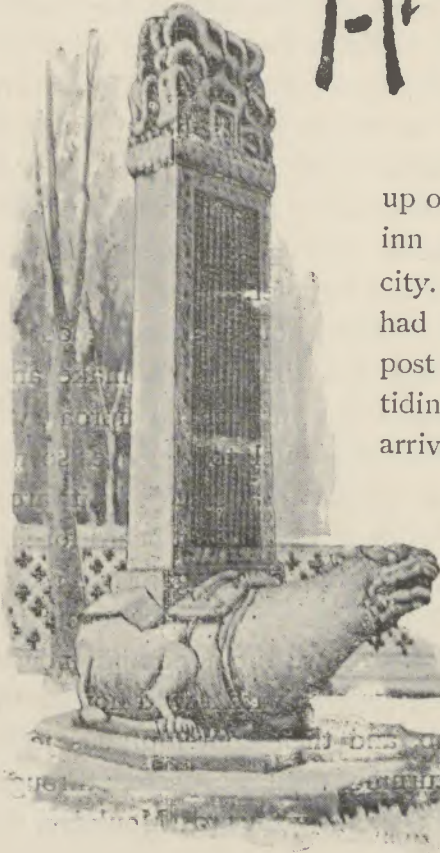
We gathered that the moving spirits in all this opposition were the scholars of the city, and some of the most active were petty officials of the court, who in those days were the most virulent foes of

Christianity in the province. Some of them were dining one day in a restaurant in the city, and meeting a young fellow, a Christian, and a friend of Mr. Chiao, they seized him, carried him in triumph to the nearest temple, forced him down upon his knees, and knocked his head a dozen times before the image of the God of Fire. Then kicking him out of the temple precincts, they vowed that any one daring to join the foreign devil's sect would be treated in like manner.

Things looked gloomy enough as we stood in the middle of the wrecked chapel. To make any attempt while the city was in such an uproar, we felt would be only adding fuel to the fire, so we resolved to return to Moukden and see how it fared with our families, of whom we had not heard for six weeks ; and after an interval, return again, and make an earnest attempt to win a way for the gospel by means of the gospel. As we mounted and moved slowly along, we were greeted with a wild howl from the victorious mob, and their contemptuous jeers met us at every turning, until we passed through the city walls and rode away towards Moukden.

IV.

PREACHING FROM THE WINDOW SILL.



HAVING rested for a week, we returned a second time to Tieling. On our arrival, we took up our quarters at an inn just outside the city. Old Chiao, who had returned to his post as soon as the tidings of our first arrival reached him, was soon on the spot, and gave us a sad account of what he had

suffered before we came. We sent him to the Yamên with our cards and passports, and a courteous request for an interview with his Excellency the magistrate. We did this with a view, if possible, to conciliate the officials, to explain the cause of our coming into their midst, and generally to move them to take action to prevent disturbances.

But we failed ; a message came back that his Excellency was indisposed, and could not see us. The plain English of that message was that he refused to see us. There remained therefore only one thing for us to do, and that we proceeded to do forthwith. We mounted our ponies, and rode to the chapel. We saw at once that it would be useless to attempt speaking inside the chapel, there would have been a riot immediately. So we barred the door, and opening the window, preached the gospel from the window sill.

I spoke first. " My good friends, will you be good enough to listen to me while I address a few words to you ? "

Perfect silence fell upon the crowd, and every eye was fixed upon me. The wonder of it ! A

foreigner actually speaking, and in a manner like other people! And having caught their eye and ear, I went on, trembling in every limb, and in broken utterances (for my Chinese was only of two years' growth), for half an hour or so, to reason with them about sin and righteousness and the judgment to come. And then Mr. Ross took my place at the window. He saw before him the literati of Tieling, the instigators of all the opposition; proud Confucianists, men of unbounded admiration for the teachings and veneration of the person of the renowned Confucius. Indeed, their hatred was inspired by the belief that we were there to do our utmost to undermine Confucianism, and replace it by the religion and teaching of Jesus, the Sage of the West. As a specimen of preaching to a heathen crowd, I give the gist of what was said on that occasion. Mr. Ross roused their attention at once by asking what was meant by being a disciple of Confucius.

"Is it," he asked, "to attend school, to bow before the tablet representing the sage, and burn incense to it? Is it to commit to memory the

characters in which his teaching has been long enshrined, to write successful essays on some fragment of his doctrine, and thereby gain a degree? If these things make men disciples of Confucius, then they were right in claiming all China as his disciples. But what said Confucius himself as to this matter of discipleship? Many young men of ability accompanied Confucius and listened to his doctrines. They learned from him the names and meanings of characters. They were instructed in the principles of correct living and civil government; and if the students of the doctrines of Confucius, in all ages and places, were to be called his disciples, surely those who were for years his personal pupils, had a special right to be called by that name. Now what does the master say? For if he has laid down a rule on the subject, who will make bold to call it in question. They knew that Confucius had a pupil named Yen Yuen, a poor man, diligent in his studies, who died while yet a youth. Confucius, regretting his early death, said of him that he was a disciple second to no one. He had

another disciple named Chiu, also a diligent student. He was familiar with the characters, and could expound the doctrines. He rose to be financial treasurer in the state, and made the treasury to overflow with oppression and robbery. Confucius heard of it, and burst out against him in anger.

“‘That man is no disciple of mine,’ said he; ‘beat your drums, my boys, and drum him out of our ranks!’ Why was this man not a disciple of Confucius? He had studied at his feet; he had learned his doctrines; he became a successful minister of state. Why did Confucius not take credit to himself for so able a minister and so successful a man? And why did he praise the obscure Yen Yuen? Was it not because the one earnestly and constantly endeavoured to practise the teaching of his master, while the other was content with knowing it? It is not, therefore, the man who can recite or expound the sayings of Confucius, but the man who endeavours to practise his precepts who has a right to be called a disciple of the sage. And if Confucius stood here to-day, how many of the literary class in Tiel-



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THE CITY WALL.

ing would he acknowledge as his real disciples? You think that we are here to upset Confucianism, and degrade Confucius ; instead of that, we are here to exalt it, and set it up into a position it has never occupied in China. For it is our desire not merely to teach the doctrines, but to have them daily practised by every one throughout the realm. We have come to proclaim to you the way in which the heart of man can be set right, so that the noble doctrines of Confucius may be exemplified in your daily life. The religion of Jesus purifies the heart, and renews the conscience, so that it can and will make the teaching of your revered sage a living power, and not a mere dead letter, which it hitherto has been in China."

The crowd listened with wonderful patience, and nothing particularly noteworthy occurred during the speaking. There were a few unruly youths who were bent on mischief, and tried to get up a disturbance, but failed. We thanked the people for their attention, and announced that we would be there again in the evening. At six o'clock the congregation was much larger, the street from side

to side, and for a long distance up and down, was packed with a dense excited crowd. We had less comfort in speaking than in the forenoon, the people were so noisy. In riding away we were jeered a good deal, "foreign devil" filled the air, and lumps of mud were thrown. Next morning found us once more at the window sill, and our arrival was the signal for an outburst of derisive laughter. There was apparently nothing to account for their merriment, but something was coming of which we were in ignorance. We spoke, and the crowd listened, some evidently with deep interest, but the rough element predominated. We closed, and prepared to move, Mr. Ross mounting first, and riding slowly down the centre of the crowd. I had just mounted when my pony, struck from behind, bolted forward and almost threw me. Fortunately I kept my seat; if I had fallen into the midst of that rough crowd, the consequences would have been somewhat serious. A volley of missiles of every description—mud, bits of brick, stones, etc., now began to fall about our ears, missing us for the most part; and as soon as we gained the

main street, we put our ponies to a fast trot, and amid the angry yells of the multitude, escaped unscathed. On arriving at the inn, we had the merriment of the crowd and their after conduct explained. It appeared that during the night, placards had been posted all over the city and suburbs, calling upon the people to rise in force and drive us forth beyond the city bounds. One of the placards was a vile description of Jesus, too blasphemous for quotation, while another was entitled "An easy way of getting rid of the Jesus religion." A number of plans were suggested, and it was confidently asserted that if they were duly carried out, the hated foreigner and his obnoxious religion would never get a footing in Tieling.

V.

SEEKERS AFTER GOD.



WE were beaten, of that there could be no question ; so we obeyed the evangelical injunction and shook the dust of the city from our feet, mounted our ponies, and rode away. It was the easiest thing to do in the circumstances ; and besides, we felt that with such a strong current

against us, it would not only be a dangerous, but a hopeless thing, to try and force ourselves just then upon the people.

But although beaten, we were not by any means subdued ; perplexed we were, but not in despair ; and we had not the slightest intention of retiring from the city for good. If there is one thing a Chinaman loves, it is precedent, and that would have been a dangerous one to give him. For, if driven from this city we had fled to another, the chances are we would have met a similar fate. Besides, there was really no occasion for despair. The Chinese, when taken in the right way, are a most reasonable people, all that was needed was a little patience. The instigators of all the opposition were the literati, and if they could be brought to their senses, we knew there was nothing to fear.

Four months passed away, and I returned to the city once more. And what a change ! I could hardly believe it was the same place, so marked was the difference in the reception I met with. It was evident that the ringleaders had been given to understand, that they had gone quite too far in

their attempts to get rid of us, and they kept out of sight. The city roughs, with no one of influence to back them up, also kept out of the way, and the people received us, if not gladly, at least respectfully.

“The foreign gentleman back again,” or “the teacher of the preaching chapel,” were the quiet remarks one heard in passing along the street. Merchants standing at their shop doors hailed us with what amounted to a “Glad to see you, sir,” in a tone that seemed to say, “We had nothing to do with that former business, and we are heartily ashamed of it.” And, best of all, the work began again most hopefully. The little chapel was crowded for hours every day, but the crowds were quiet, orderly, eager listeners. There could be no doubt that the dark cloud had passed away, or rather had broken in a shower of blessing upon us. The opposition of the previous months had been for the furtherance of the gospel, and God had made the wrath of man to praise Him. Old Chiao was jubilant. All the troubles of the past were forgotten in the joy of the present. He had gone away weeping, he was back again rejoicing with

the first-fruits of a harvest yet to be. "O the grace of the Lord!" he would say, "we are permitted to preach in quietness, the people are inclining their ears to hear, and we have friends in Tieling not a few." And he preached, morning, noon, and night, in season and out of season; there was nothing else worth thinking about, or speaking about, or living for, but the "grace of the Lord."

By and by the old man was reinforced, and he had leisure to move about the city, talking quietly with individuals. He would get hold of an enquirer, and, inviting him into a tea-shop, would talk with him about his soul for half a day. This was the sort of work he delighted in. Public preaching was not his forte, but in the work of dealing with individuals he was quite at home, and he threw himself into it with his whole heart. He had learned the art of saving men at the feet of his old friend Wang, or rather they both received it from their common Lord.

Men began to gather round him—men for the most part not strangers to the religious instinct, but who had been striving to find rest in some form

of worship or another ; for those who have joined the Christian Church have for the most part been earnest Buddhists all their lives, seeking by contemplation and self-renunciation in some form, to attain to salvation and soul rest. It is from this class that the most earnest enquirers have hitherto come, and they do not come to the foreign missionary in the first instance, so long as there is a native Christian to whom they can go. The foreigner, be he ever so near the Chinaman in dress or manner or speech, is worlds apart from him in the deepest things. The more genuine the soul trouble, the more eagerly will he turn to his own kith and kin for help. If a man came to me and professed anxiety about his soul, and asked me to show him the way, of course I should do it, and be glad of the opportunity. At the same time, I should be asking myself the question, "What is this fellow after?" the chances being about a hundred to one that he had something else to ask of me, something that bulked much more largely in his mind than the desire for salvation. If a man is really anxious to be saved, he will seek out the humblest believer among his own

fellow-countrymen before he comes to the foreign missionary ; at least that is my experience.

This is something like what it was in Tieling. A man would drop into the little chapel, led there by sheer curiosity to hear this new thing, this foreign *Tao*, or Way. He would hear much with which he was already familiar, and would go away remarking that it was just the old thing over again—the doctrine of the sages. But as he came again and again, it would gradually dawn upon him, that there was something in the doctrine of Jesus that was altogether different to the teaching of the scribes. A living personal God, man a sinner, a divine Saviour Jesus ; as these great truths were dwelt upon, his interest would grow, and conviction would slowly take root in his mind. Then, with the old question, “What must I do to be saved ?” this anxious soul would find out Mr. Chiao, and would say to him :

“May I with you speak one word ? I have a matter that I pray you to explain to me.” Then he would pour out his questions, his doubts and fears, into the sympathetic ears of Chiao, who would sit with him for hours together, reasoning with him,

telling him " words whereby he might be saved," taking him by the hand, and in a way the wisest and best of foreign missionaries could never do, leading him gently forward step by step out of the wilderness, across that strange borderland we know so little of, from heathenism to Christ, out of darkness into light. Then he would come to me with a new light in his eye, eagerly, confidently, all reserve and suspicion gone, and would say : " Pastor, I believe in Jesus and I wish to become a disciple ; will you receive me, and give me holy baptism ? "

It is at this point our real work begins—in the gathering together of those who have been brought to Christ through the instrumentality of their fellow-countrymen, and " baptizing them into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever He hath commanded." Although there is a boundless field for the work of the evangelist, and every foreign missionary *must* be an evangelist, labouring for the souls of the heathen as those who must give account, it must ever be remembered that it is the home missionary, and not the

foreign missionary, who is the great soul-winner in China.

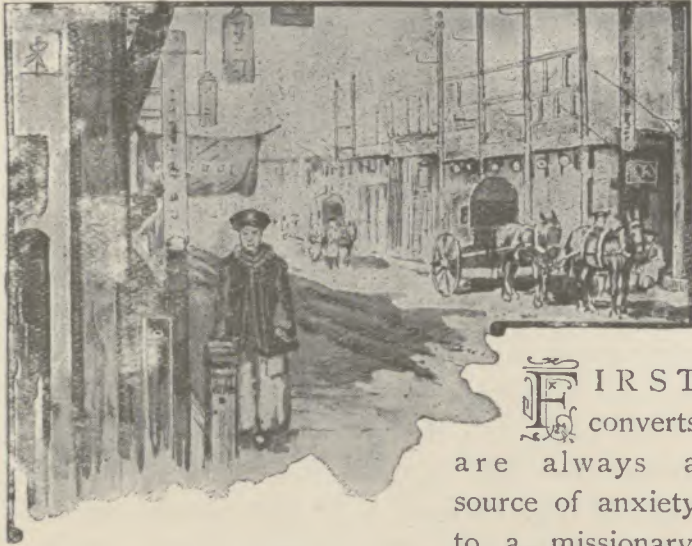
Those days in which Old Chiao laboured in the Gospel in the city of Tieling were the happiest days of his life. He literally wore himself out in the work, and it was not difficult to do. In a few months his health broke down, he had very reluctantly to go home, and was never able to take part in the work again. An urgent message came to me one spring morning, and I went to him, I found him on his k'ang, and it was evident that his end was near. We spoke together long and happily of Tieling, of his troubles and trials there, of souls won to Christ by his means. He lay and listened, a glad smile lighting up his wan countenance, as I told him of this and that one—whom he knew, and to whom he had been a blessing—having been baptized. Every now and then he would break out into his favourite ejaculation: "The grace of the Lord! The grace of the Lord!" When he heard we were to have the communion in Moukden on the following Lord's day, he suddenly sat upright on his k'ang, and said with great earnestness: "Pastor, I would like to

be there : I *will* go ; you will send a cart for me, will you not, and I will once more remember my Redeemer's death, and praise Him with my brethren before I die !” To humour him, I promised, but before the day came, Old Chiao had passed away.



VI.

FIRST-FRUITS OF BLESSING.



FIRST converts are always a source of anxiety to a missionary.

The future of the mission so much depends upon the character of those who form the nucleus of it, and that is a matter of which we cannot judge, but we must to a very large extent depend upon the native helpers. There are

always unworthy characters prowling about during the early days of a mission, ready to profess anything in order to gain their own unworthy ends. "Beware of first converts," is the very salutary advice of a missionary of many years' experience. The world judges the Church by its fruits always, and all the world over, but nowhere with a more pitiless judgment than among the heathen. A false step at the beginning therefore, may injure the cause in any place for years to come. So we were in no hurry baptizing people in Tieling, lest by over-haste we should admit those who would be a heart-break to us, and a reproach to the name of Christ.

But if the anxiety is great, the joy of first-fruits from a new field is also great, and it was an unspeakable joy to receive the first converts into the Christian fold in Tieling. With the exception of one young man, who was baptized early, because he was about to emigrate to a distant part of the country, we waited for many months ; and then one Sabbath day a few simple, sensible, seemingly earnest men stood up and professed their faith in

Christ, and were baptized into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The busy world outside went on its way, knowing not, and heeding not what was going on within. Yet the greatest thing in all the city's history had happened that day—a thing that would be remembered when everything else was forgotten—for the first stones in the Temple of the living God had been laid that day in Tieling.

They were the first-fruits of the Tieling revival, for of course it was a revival movement. What else could it be? Never was the Church of God founded anywhere from Pentecost till the present day, without a movement like this—a spiritual awakening, “life from the dead.” They are not all with us now, for some fell away. Like the hearers in the crowd by the Lake of Galilee, there were men among them in whose minds the doctrine of the kingdom awakened no higher hopes than those of worldly gain, so they very quickly disappeared. But there were some who received the doctrine of the kingdom into good and noble hearts, and they remain with us to this day. Some had heard the

gospel before—one many years ago in the port of Newchwang, one in Moukden—but to the most of them it was altogether new.

“When did you first hear of Christ?” we asked of one man who was among the first to come forward.

“How could I hear,” he replied, “without a preacher? I never knew of the Saviour till I heard Pastor Ross and you preaching from the window sill at the old chapel; and I said to myself, there must be something in this doctrine worth enquiring into, when these foreigners have come so far to make it known.” Then he went on to tell how he left his work that day, like hundreds besides, to see the strange sight, and something had been said that arrested him, and led him to inquire. He was not the only one who mentioned the old opium-shop chapel as the place of their spiritual awakening; and we took it as a token for good, of days of blessing yet in store for Tieling, that the Lord had thus set His seal to the work from the very commencement.

The first company to be baptized were all men;

it is almost always so in a new locality. Heathen women can never hear the gospel so as to understand it, until their husbands or sons teach them, unless, indeed, they receive it from lady missionaries or native biblewomen. By and by they did hear it from the members of their own families; a husband told his wife, and she carried the good news to others. The eagerness with which the story of God's love has been welcomed by many in all our country stations shows what a noble work might be done among the Chinese women by earnest, consecrated lady-missionaries.

Nor were there any rich men among them, or men of rank; for it is true as of yore, "not many mighty, not many noble are called." Still that little company of first believers showed that the gospel of Jesus was a gospel for all, suited to the wants of all, meant in the purpose of grace for all. The fairly well-to-do, and the very poor were there; the scholar, who had read from first to last the whole Confucian lore, and the cottar, who did not know one character from another; the merchant and his man together, came to kneel before their



common Lord, whose grace had gladdened both their hearts.

Shii Wen Ming was the scholar, a young man of twenty-four, whose heart was captivated by the gospel as soon as he heard it. He practically gave up everything in order to study it. Persecuted by family and friends, he betook himself to the chapel, and stayed there for weeks, reading, asking questions, and discussing points of doctrine with the preacher. Of keen intellect and receptive soul, he quickly grasped the fundamental principles of the Christian faith. He was not satisfied with the little system ready made, to be found in the catechisms usually put into the hands of enquirers. He went to the fountain-head, and when he came forward as an applicant for baptism, I found he had the Gospel of Luke at his finger ends. The whole spirit and bearing of the man showed that the truth had taken hold of him, and I remember with what joy and hope we received him into the church. He began almost immediately to lift up his voice as a witness for Christ, and was encouraged to study the Bible with a view to future use-

fulness. In the autumn of 1887 he came up for a first examination, and was appointed a student evangelist. At that time, the Rev. T. C. Fulton of the Irish mission was in need of a man to labour in a new and hopeful field just then opening up, and Shü was chosen and sent. Since then he has been labouring in the gospel under my friend Mr. Fulton, who, after a period of five testing years, speaks thus of him :—

“ He is a good man, a man of spirituality of mind, and an earnest student of the Bible, with whom the gospel is the all in all of life. During the years he has been labouring with me, he has established himself in my confidence as a good and able minister of Jesus Christ to his fellow-countrymen. Many hundreds have been led into the Church through his instrumentality, and now he is practically doing the work of pastor as well as evangelist, over our numerous and growing stations west of the Liao. Take him for all in all, he is by far the best and most trustworthy man I have in the mission.”

Another of that first little company was a man named *Shing*, a small farmer from a neighbouring

hamlet among the hills. Shing was a different sort of man altogether from Shü, who stood beside him on the day of their baptism. I remember how his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth when he came forward as an applicant, how his eyes went from point to point in the room with nervous restlessness, and the beads of perspiration stood upon the poor man's brow! He always reminded one of Faber's "Old Labourer":—

" His inexpressive eye
Peered round him vacantly,
As if whate'er he did he would be chidden,"

and I set him down in my mind as "an innocent sort of creature with a want." The years passed away and Shing seldom entered my thoughts. Once or twice he got a supply of books from me, to give, he said, to some of his friends. Then in the autumn of last year, I received a letter from the Tieling elder, urging me to go to a certain district away up the valley of the Tsai River, where there were a number of earnest enquirers. I went and found somewhere about a hundred applicants for admission into the Church. Many of them were

really earnest, well-instructed men, and when I asked how they came to know the truths of Christianity, with one accord they pointed to my old friend Shing, "the innocent sort of creature with a want"! Day by day he led me about from village to village, all up and down that glen, introducing me to one after another, to whom he had brought the word of life, men who called him 'Mister Shing,' and who listened to him with the most profound respect. Of course I very soon found that he was not by any means a fool, but a man modest to a fault, with an intense love of the gospel and desire to win men to Christ. We elected Shü, and put him on the preachers' list; we would never have dreamt of placing Shing's name there. But God put His seal upon him, and this poor illiterate farmer has probably introduced more men to Christ than all the foreign missionaries in Manchuria put together. Truly in the matter of choosing instruments to do His work

"God judges by a light

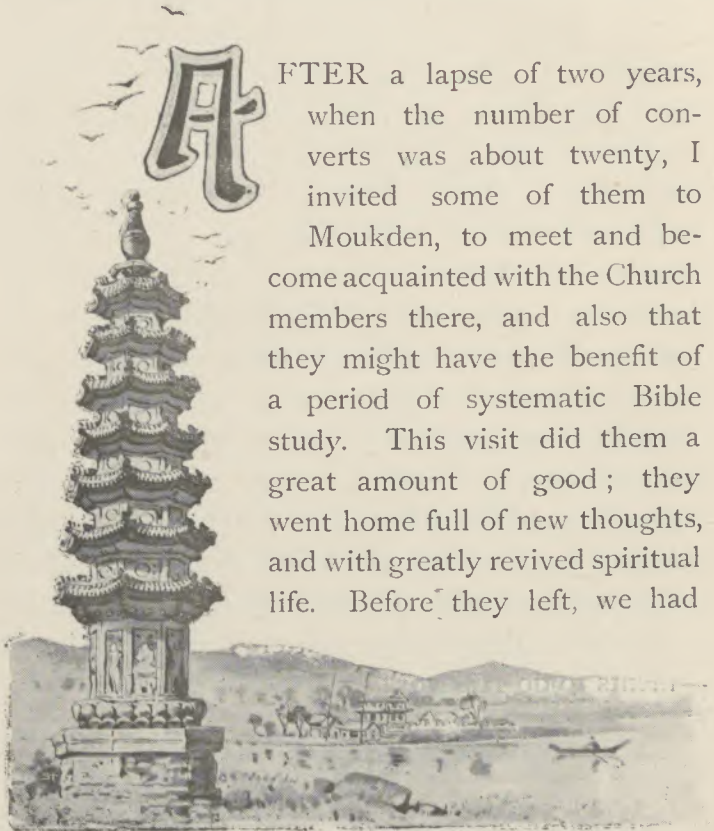
That baffles mortal sight,

And the useless-seeming man the crown has won,"

"that no flesh should glory in His presence."

VII.

THE DEEPENING OF SPIRITUAL LIFE.



A

AFTER a lapse of two years, when the number of converts was about twenty, I invited some of them to Moukden, to meet and become acquainted with the Church members there, and also that they might have the benefit of a period of systematic Bible study. This visit did them a great amount of good; they went home full of new thoughts, and with greatly revived spiritual life. Before they left, we had

the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and the hearts of the Tieling men were so moved by what they heard and saw, that nothing would satisfy them, but that we should have the communion in Tieling as well; so we had it, and it was a memorable time. The visit to Moukden had begotten a spirit of prayer, of heart-searching and expectation towards God, the sort of preparation suited to a sacrament. We held the service in the street chapel, there would be some thirty people in the room, an eager, expectant, reverential company. Greater solemnity was never witnessed at any communion service since the first one in the upper room. There was nothing new, and yet everything was new. I rehearsed the simple story of the founding of the feast, and we sang together, for the first time in Tieling, the old communion hymn which for so many ages has stirred men's hearts throughout the world:

“Twas on that night, when doomed to know
The eager rage of every foe,
That night in which He was betrayed,
The Saviour of the world took bread.”

When the hymn was finished, the little company remained standing, while I quietly repeated the Lord's own words, "This do in remembrance of Me." There was no elder to assist me, so I took the bread and wine myself, and walking down the midst of them, gave to each communicant the memorials of the Saviour's dying love, saying as I did so, "The Saviour says, 'This do in remembrance of Me.'" It was the only departure from use and wont, and quite unpremeditated. Thus amid the deepest stillness, broken by an occasional half-suppressed sob, the solemn rite was observed. To me it was the most blessed communion I ever took part in before or since. One felt it was no ordinary communion service, or rather, that it was what every service ought to be—a time of the deepening of spiritual life. Who could have believed that in the very centre of the same city, out of which we had literally been driven by a hostile mob, in less than three years we should have thus been celebrating in peace and quiet the dying of the Lord Jesus. As we looked upon that little company of men, who had been made the recipients

of the Divine grace, and were now taking part in this first celebration of the holiest of all sacraments, with intelligence and fervour, we could only say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His Holy Name."

There was no outward show, nothing to interfere between the soul of the worshipper and the unseen Lord, whose death we were showing forth. They went to the street and brought some grapes, pressing out the juice to make the wine, and the coarse native *mantu* served for bread. Communion vessels we had none, the cup we used was borrowed for the occasion from my travelling basket, as the most convenient at our disposal. But what did it matter, Jesus was in the midst, and every heart in the room was touched and deeply moved. Peculiarly impressive it was, when one man who had contemplated communicating, drew back at the last moment, and when I offered him the elements, gently motioned me away, and, breaking out in tears, said, "Pastor, I dare not do it." Then we sang another hymn together, and parted.

But from that first communion, or deepening of

spiritual life, dates the beginning of a new era in our Tieling mission. The work now began to break out upon the right hand and the left, and to spread all over the country with marvellous rapidity. Westwards, across the river of the plain; up and down the main road, downwards towards Moukden on the south; up towards Mai Mai Gai on the north; into the upland glens of the eastern hills, the fire spread. Family after family, village after village, heard and echoed the gospel story. Now and then there was a breeze of persecution, but it served only to fan the flame; and now in plain and valley, hundreds of homes ring with the glad strains of the Saviour's praise. How it would gladden the heart of all who love the gospel, and who wish well to this Holy War, to hear these strains, and to mingle in the lifting up of the heart in prayer and thanksgiving to "Our Father which art in Heaven," with those whose souls have been gladdened and enriched and redeemed by the gospel of the grace of God. The blessing has not been confined to Tieling and the immediate surroundings. It has spread northwards for many miles, until now within the region,

in the centre of which my colleague and I stood less than ten years ago, looking out upon a wide waste without an inhabitant, there are now upwards of a thousand, who not only do not bow the knee to Baal, but have received the message of salvation in Jesus, and have believed it, and have publicly professed their faith in Christ through the rite of holy baptism.

So the first stage in the history of the Christian Church in this locality has passed away; the meaning and aims of the Christian evangel have become widely known both by officials and people; and opposition from without has ceased almost entirely. Within the next few years in this region alone, we hope to see at least twenty organized congregations of Christian people, wholly self-propagating, and to a large extent self-supporting and self-governing; and the same tale might be told of other parts of Manchuria.

I have had the question put to me, what has brought all this remarkable change about? I have put it to myself oftentimes, and attempted to answer it in a variety of ways, chiefly human. But there

has always been something wrong somehow with the result, as one has tried to fit the effect into this or that particular human agency as a cause. After all, it has been the gospel of the blessed God that has brought it all about—that old story, ever old yet ever new—of the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, His humiliation, His life on earth, His wondrous words and works, His atoning death, His resurrection and glorious ascension, the offer of pardon full and free, of reconciliation with God, and eternal life through His name. It is this, and nothing else besides, that has done it. The gospel has been the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and glad tidings of great joy, to those villages in distant Manchuria, no less than to the shepherds in the plains of Bethlehem, or the peoples to whom Paul preached it nineteen centuries ago. But how does it come to pass that in distant Manchuria, more so than in most places, the harvest of the gospel has been so early, so abundant, and so full of joy? To that question both the creed, and the facts of the case, admit only of one answer :

“ The grace of faith, whereby men are enabled to

believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word."

"Pastor," said a native friend to me one day, after we had listened to a story of a wonderful religious awakening, when men's hearts were greatly moved by the gospel, and great numbers were eagerly pressing around the gates of the kingdom, "Pastor, *the time is fulfilled!* It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Doubtless God in His holy providence had been working towards this result long before the messengers came on the field with the message. As already remarked, many of those who were among the first to come under the influence of the gospel in the northern part of Manchuria, and have been the chief sources of blessing to their fellows, belonged originally to one or other of the more zealous sects of the Buddhist religion. Had not God by this means been dealing with them, and awakening within them desires after Himself, which the empty rites and ceremonies of their old faith could never satisfy? Like the good and true

Israelites of old, they were "waiting for the consolation," looking for the rising of another star, and so when the good news came, it awakened a ready response within their hearts. Here they felt was an answer to all their longings, the very light they had been groping for, the peace and joy they had sought for otherwise in vain. The gospel came to them, therefore, as to the Thessalonians of old, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." They received it as readily and naturally as the thirsty earth drinks in the dews of heaven, and so "they sprang up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One said, I am the Lord's; and another subscribed with his hand unto the Lord, and surnamed himself by the name of Israel."

"Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel."



