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Rev. E. McLEOD, }
Editor and Proprietor

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Religious Selections.

Missionary Travels in China.

A VISIT TO THE NORTH.
In the chronicle of the London Missionary Society for the month of July there are some very interesting and hope communications from China. The Rev. Griffith John gives a pleasing account of a journey made by himself and his brother missionary, Mr. Edkins, through an extensive district or province of Northern China previously unknown. They were not only the first Protestant missionaries, but, to a great extent, the first foreigners who had ever been seen by the Chinese inhabitants. The country appears to present many scenes of beauty and fertility, and also an amount of peace and prosperity affording a striking contrast to the provinces of the South. The people proved hospitable and kind, and were ready to listen to the gracious and wonderful truths, which they heard for the first time, with attention and pleasure. Shantung, although less populous than some other of the Chinese provinces, contains a population of nearly twenty-nine millions; and we cannot wonder at the mournful reflections with which Mr. John concludes his letter, and which, we trust, may have their just influence in stimulating our zeal, our efforts, and our prayers:—"What is one station and two missionaries for the whole Shantung province, with its twenty-nine millions of human souls? or for the twenty-eight millions of Chih-li? or for the teeming millions that line the banks of the mighty Yangtze? Nothing; absolutely nothing. Let us pray that the Lord of the harvest may trust forth more labourers to gather in the precious produce of this mighty field." Mr. John sets out by observing that the province of Shantung, with the exception of the peninsula, is nearly level. Its area is about 65,000 square miles, or equal to that of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales together. The census of 1812 gives for its population 28,958,764, which is an average of 44 to a square mile. The Grand Canal, which traverses the province from Lin-sing Cheu, in the north-west, in a south-easterly direction through the western districts, adds materially to its importance. Tai Shan, one of the highest mountains in China, is situated in this province. This mountain is celebrated not only for its height, but also as one of the principal rendezvous of devotees in China. Its bases and sides are covered with the most magnificent temples in the province. In the spring, the roads leading to it are thronged with pilgrims coming to pay their vows and offer up their prayers. The province is celebrated in Chinese history from its containing the birth-places of the sages Confucius and Mencius. The tomb of the former, who died B. C. 479, at Kin-fu, is a majestic monument embosomed in a forest of oaks.

HOPEFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE

Mr. John says:—"The people are thrifty, harmless, and unpretentious. They are finer in appearance and more manly in character than those of the south. The humanity which one sees here is more intelligible to us as foreigners, being more like that which we have been accustomed to. They seem also to be more susceptible of religious impressions. Many of them have a distinct notion of a Supreme Being, who dwells not in temples made with hands, and who cannot be represented in carved wood or chiselled marble. Idolatry, though common, has not apparently a strong hold on the general mind. The priests are fewer and poorer than elsewhere, and the temples are not so numerous, opulent, and ostentatious. It seems to me that Christianity will win some of its speediest and most brilliant victories in Shantung. This people are better prepared for the reception of the truth in its simplicity and purity than any I have hitherto seen in this land. Very little, as yet, has been done towards the evangelization of this most interesting part of China. The Roman Catholics have some converts in the western part of the province, but none, I believe on the peninsula. For some years, at Shanghai, books have been distributed on board the junks which frequent that port from different parts of the country. Many copies of the Scriptures and other Christian books have reached this place; and it is by no means a rare thing to meet with persons who have heard the Gospel preached at our chapels in the city of Shanghai. Mr. Edkins and brother missionary of the American Baptist Society, visited the province about three or four months ago. Both have been here ever since. On my arrival I found that two of the natives and a Nankin man had received the ordinance of baptism—probably the first time the ordinance has ever been administered in Shantung by a Protestant missionary. May this be but the earnest of a glorious harvest to be gathered in the province!"

A PREACHING HOUSE ERECTED AT THE DISTRICT CITY OF FU-SHAN.

Since my arrival I have visited nearly all the towns and villages in the vicinity of Che-fu, and have been generally pleased with the conduct and character of the people. Most of them are able to read, with considerable ease, the Mandarin version of the New Testament. They receive the books thankfully, and listen to the preaching attentively. Mr. Edkins and myself rode to the district city of Fu-shan, with the view of renting a room for preaching. We called

at the magistrate's office, to inquire of him whether there would be any objection to the landlord's letting it. He received us kindly, and replied that, both nations being now one family, there could be no objection on his part. The house was rented, and the Gospel has been preached daily at Fu-shan ever since. The population is about 10,000.

HEALTHINESS OF CHE-FU, AND BEAUTY OF THE SCENERY.

Between it and Che-fu there are several small towns thickly populated. This, though circumscribed, is an interesting sphere of labour. Even now it is superior to Tang Cheu-fu in a commercial point of view, and as it is to become the consular port, it will rapidly grow in importance. The climate is very cold in the winter, but very salubrious. No sooner does one set his foot on shore, than he begins to feel its quickening and invigorating effects. Every breath seems to inspire a new life into the whole frame. The scenery in spring and summer must be exquisitely beautiful. Even now (February) it is charming. On a fine day, when the north wind is thoroughly hushed, there are views from the top of the neighboring hills which far surpass everything I have seen in the Flowery Land. The wide-spread ocean, sleeping as calm as an infant, the pretty harbour, as placid as a lake; the snow-clad mountains towering one above the other, and stretching away indefinitely toward the east and west; the little towns and villages nestling in the bosom of the rocks; the winding paths, now ascending the brow of the rock and now descending into the valley, and thronged with a busy peasantry and their beasts of burden, and a glorious sun benignantly smiling upon the whole—all conspire to fire the imagination and ravish the heart. It is man alone that poisons the golden cup which Nature holds out with a cheer to her sons and daughters.

JOURNEY TO THE CITIES OF TUNG CHEU-FU, AND HWANG HEIN.

On the 24th of January Mr. E. and myself left Che-fu for the cities of Tung Cheu-fu and Hwang-hein. The former is a departmental city, and is 60 English miles from this place; the latter is a district city, and is about 80 English miles distant. The means of travelling are horses, mules, and carts. The sedan chair of the south is seldom seen here, and boats would be altogether useless. We had two ponies for ourselves, and two mules for our books and luggage. We stopped at a place called Kang Yiu, to feed our horses and refresh ourselves with some bread and eggs. Whilst waiting, we had an opportunity of speaking a few words to those who gathered around us. I was pleased to find one or two in the crowd who had heard the Gospel at Shanghai. Early on the following morning we were on our saddles again. We breakfasted at Tsh-shih-li-pu, about seven miles distant. Here I preached to a large number of attentive hearers, and gave away a few books. Two or three mad themselves known to me as having heard the doctrine before at Shanghai. We reached Tung Cheu about five p. m. We were led to a comfortable inn in the centre of the city. No sooner did we arrive, than messengers were sent from each of the Mandarin offices to inquire into our history. "Your honourable name? Where are you from? Whither are you going? What public office do you fill?" &c. These, and such questions as these, were put by each new messenger. Probably their principal object was to learn whether we were public officers, and if so, to give us a reception worthy of our rank and position. Saturday I spent in preaching and distributing books along the streets. Large crowds followed me, many from mere curiosity to see and hear a foreigner, but some with no other intention than to learn what this new doctrine is. The city of Tung Cheu is divided into two—the city proper and the water city. The former is surrounded by a wall, and is entirely distinct from the latter. The principal hongs are in it. In this city there is a hill called the Pung-shih-hill, on the top of which there is a beautiful temple, called the Pung-shih Koh. This temple commands a magnificent view of the sea, of the islands, and of the surrounding country. The city of Tung Cheu is considered large in this part of China. The population is about 150,000. The east-west street is thronged from morning till night with the country people who bring their goods to sell. The whole country seems to be pouring into the city in the morning and out again in the evening. A chapel opening into this street would be well attended all day. As a missionary station it is preferable to Che-fu. Mr. Hartwell, a missionary of the American Baptist Society, has, since our return, rented a house in the city. It is cheering to see these important places taken up with such promptitude. No objection was made by the magistrates, though they were told plainly that his only object in coming is to preach the Gospel. On the following day, I rode to the city of Hwang-shien, with sixty or seventy copies of the New Testament and some tracts. After spending an hour and a half in preaching and distributing books, I returned to Tung Cheu. At this city, as well as elsewhere, the people were very quiet and harmless. With very few exceptions, the books were sought with eagerness. This city, though large, is inferior to Tung Cheu in rank, population and beauty of position. It is situated on that immense plain which stretches southwards beyond Shanghai, northwards beyond

Peking, and far into the west. Every part of the province may be easily visited from it. It is on the highway to Peking.

PROGRESS OF THE INSURGENTS, AND GRADUAL DECAY OF THE MANCHU POWER.

I have learned that the insurgents are making rapid strides into this province. It is fortunate for us that the Tartars have their hands full just now, as the value of the recent treaty rests solely on the weakness of the existing dynasty. The Tartars hate us with an insatiable hatred, and would, in spite of the treaty, recommence warlike operations to-morrow, had they the power. To break faith with the barbarian is not crime but virtue, according to their creed, if his humiliation and expulsion might thereby be effected. The wonderful progress of the insurrection in the south, during the last year, and the repeated defeats and the complete discomfiture of the Tartar hosts in the north, have thoroughly undermined the Manchu power. It must fall. There is no power in China to uphold it. The Kwangsi insurrection, on the other hand, must triumph, if foreign powers do not interfere. The Manchus might as well attempt to blow the sun out of the heaven, as to quench this flame, which their folly and tyranny have kindled.

PRESENT ASPECT OF CHINA AS A FIELD FOR MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

China presents, at the present moment, a most interesting and exciting spectacle to the Christian Church. What the fathers of the London Missionary Society desired to see, but did not see, and what Morrison, Milne, Medhurst, and others who have gone to their reward, laboured diligently, prayerfully, and with tears to attain, but did not attain, we now see and possess. How many prayers have been answered on behalf of this great but benighted land! The fallen tears and the ascended sighs of the people of God have not been in vain. This vast country, in all its length and breadth, is now thrown open to the missionary of the cross. The whole of the imperial territory is opened by the recent treaty, and that of the insurgents by the imperial edict, which I had the honour and privilege to procure through the Kan-wang. Moreover, the insurgents themselves are still determinedly opposed to idolatry in all its features. At their approach, the idols vanish, and the priests of Buddha and Tan disappear. The downfall of idolatry in the land seems to be bound up with their success. Never did China present such a spectacle to the Christian world. Will the Church, unfaithful to her Head and false to herself, as depository of the blessings of light and life for the world, look on with indifference? Shall the four hundred millions of China remain in their states of darkness and death, because of the worldliness and deadness of the people of God? Shall not the cry which now goes forth from this land penetrate our universities, and colleges, and churches, and elicit a response in many a heart devoted to Christ, worthy of the urgency and solemnity of the occasion? Men who shall know nothing among the people save Christ and him crucified, is the want of China.

New York Daily Prayer-meeting. A VOICE FROM INDIA.

A missionary from India said he wished to say a few words as to the influence of this meeting and the great good which is done through it. You must not think, said he, that what you see here and what you feel here is all that belongs to this meeting. Not so. It is but a small part of influence, which you see and feel, that properly belongs to this meeting. God uses it to stir up Christians to prayer who live in another continent and on another side of the globe. When the great revival began in this Prayer Meeting in 1857 and we began to hear of it in 1858, oh, how anxiously did we pray and look for it to reach India.

We read of its progress and thanked the Lord and took courage. We week by week read the reports of this meeting. You thought the meeting had expended itself when the meeting was over. But not so. Months after, hearts were gladdened in India, and prayers were offered that God would roll on the wave of salvation until it reached all India.

What you see and hear is but a small part of this meeting. Shall I tell you that it spreads and reproduces itself all over the world? So it does. It does this by awakening the same spirit of faith and prayer which God owns and answers so graciously here. God uses this as a means. What a blessed means is it of reviving faith and prayer everywhere. Oh! you cannot measure the preciousness nor the vastness of it. When we heard of the revival in Ireland and England and Scotland, and saw how God was rolling on the wave of salvation there, prayer was more excited still. We prayed for India; oh! how earnestly! Then when the revival had actually reached the north of India, we of the south prayed on for southern India. I belong to the Madura Mission, and now how has God answered prayer for southern India! You have read of this wonderful work of grace in southern India. Such turnings to the Lord by scores and hundreds the oldest missionaries had never seen. Now in the providence of God I am here to thank you and to thank the Lord for this meeting. I know not how to do it sufficiently and so that God alone shall be honored. All honours belong to him!

Still the wave rolls on, and the Islands of the Sea are rejoicing in the same revival influence. I have heard, since I have been here, that which convinces me that the wave will come westward from the far distant east, and again swell over this land. The time has come when we should pray that one great revival may spread the wide—wide world around. "Let thy kingdom come."

REVIVAL IN SCOTLAND.

A young man appeared in the meeting and addressed it by special invitation. He was introduced by one of the New York Sunday School Union, who stated that it was from him that he had received the letter in regard to the revival on the Great Eastern in her recent voyage with British troops to Canada.

The gentleman stated that he believed that hundreds would remember their voyage across the Atlantic in the Great Eastern with everlasting joy. A large number he hoped had been converted on the passage.

But it was of Scotland more especially that he wished to speak. We had often heard of the revival in Scotland. It had prevailed more or less over the whole country. In many cities and towns it had been very powerful.

When the "Power of Prayer" was republished in Scotland, many prayer meetings were established in consequence of reading of the great revival in America. The people said we must pray for a revival in Scotland. So a daily prayer meeting was resolved upon. But at first the great mistake was made of loading the meeting down with cold formality. There were often four or five ministers who would preside, and would exhort or pray in his turn according to a prescribed programme. Sometimes an elder who had been notified three or four days before of the duty he would be expected to perform on a given day, would arise and speak and pray. One of their rules was that no prayer was expected to be more than fifteen minutes long.

Skeletons of this kind of daily prayer meeting have been found all over Scotland. They soon died out.

But there arose in the place of them another kind of daily prayer meeting. It was modeled more especially after the Fulton street meeting. It was found out that all could speak or pray who felt moved of the Holy Spirit. The meetings became exceedingly crowded and interesting. People flocked to them; some out of curiosity, some out of earnest desire to be benefited, and some out of opposition, to pick up an argument against them. Sometimes a thousand persons would be gathered in one meeting. Prayers, short exhortations, and narratives of christian experience would follow each other in rapid succession, and some who came to mock would go away to pray.

The current of christian sentiment soon began to change in regard to the influence, which was the controlling power in these meetings. Ministers, who came at first to look on, began to be convinced that this was the work of the Spirit of God, and could be no other. When convinced, they were ready to forward the work by all the means in their power. They stood boldly up to their duties and responsibilities as ministers of the Lord Jesus.

Then the work proceeded with great power. Old men and children, the rich and the poor, shared in it alike. You might see them all sitting together in the same meeting and away and moved by the same influence. All denominations shared alike in the rich blessings which was bestowed. The work spread from town to town and city to city. The long-suppressed vitality which had laid dormant so long in the Church of Scotland now received a new development in the working power of the laity of the Church. Every one found that there was something for every one to do. This was a new idea and setting on it brought out new results. A new freedom in the Church was achieved, and became intensified and consolidated by ceaseless use. Then, in right good earnest, with deliberate purpose, began multifarious activities in teaching, preaching and working—all upon a higher level. This rebound vibrated through all churches—the Established, the Free and all the other churches of the land. Each in its own turn was clothed with new spiritual power.

The preaching of Christopher North was like the preaching of John the Baptist: "Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Mr. North invited anxious sinners to meet him, and anxious sinners came to him in great numbers. He was endowed with mental and material riches; and stood in a position where he could lay his hand on the shoulder of the highest man in the realm and say: "Come thou with us and we will do the good." Among the lowly he was no less acceptable and useful.

Miraculous things were heard as being done in America. No counterpart to these were done in Scotland until this new order of things began. Then we had the same revival scenes of America repeated in Scotland.

In Glasgow, as well as in other cities and towns of Scotland, there has been a counterpart of that blessed work which has been and is now going on in America—the turning of multitudes of children to the Lord. It was most animating to hear them singing the same sweet hymns which we hear in this country and in this meeting.

The speaker gave many examples of the conversion of children which had come under his

own observation, the meeting being deeply moved by the narrations. He also stated some cases of remarkable conversion among the high and cultivated classes of the city—all illustrating the power of that work which has sent so much joy into the thousands on thousands of hearts on this side of the Atlantic. We could do no justice to these narratives of conversion in special cases without transcending the limits of a report of the meeting! He mentioned places of prayer in some of the cities of Scotland to which requests flow from all quarters of the land and of the world, just as to the Fulton street prayer meeting, and where conversions transpire almost every day.

LOST.

Every hour spent in sin is a loss to the universe. It is an opportunity for doing good neglected or a season misimproved, in which strength might have been gathered and preparation made for future benefit to the world. It more ordinarily is a time occupied in planting a seed of death in the soil of some heart, or nurturing and promoting the growth of one already sated, in placing thorns in the dying pillow of some heedless mortal, hanging millstones around the neck of some soul, strengthening the coils by which satan binds a friend, or at the best in adding piognancy to the grief of repentance, bitterness to the cup of contrition, and fierceness to the conflict with those spiritual foes which are already too powerful. It is so much added to the aggregate amount of sin and rebellion and misery in the world, and so much strength withdrawn from the kingdom of God without the possibility of restitution.

Every day which one spends in sin is a loss to himself—a loss which is irreparable. It weakens his moral strength, diminishes his power of resistance for all coming time, and adds vigor to his wicked appetites, which will either propel him farther and deeper into the vortex of sin and wretchedness, contribute to fill up his cup with wrath and indignation, or, at least, increase the fearful odds against him in a coming conflict for a victory over himself. It is a loss of an opportunity to make an effort for God, which, whether successful or not, would secure an eternal reward—perhaps a misimprovement of a favorable opportunity for winning a soul to God and placing a bright star in that eternal diadem. At the very least, it is the neglect of a God-given opportunity for growing in knowledge, grace and happiness, which can never be redeemed.

All the tears and sighs of penitence which may be extorted by a remembrance of our sins, can neither obliterate them nor counteract their baneful influence. They will stand as monuments of our shame in every review of our former life. (Those follies and indiscretions of our youth, those rash and thoughtless acts of our riper years, those short-comings which are occasionally interspersed with our Christian experience, can neither be annihilated nor atoned for by future consecration and obedience. The blood of a crucified Redeemer can wash the guilt of them all from our conscience, but cannot make up the loss which we sustain, and which the moral universe sustains, as a consequence of a single sin. How universal is the blindness of the world, and how dim the vision of the church on this vital subject! The opinion seems to prevail that sin repented of is the same as sin not committed, that a life of iniquity repented of is the same as a life-time of holiness; whereas, God has a holy life to us to live, as well as a triumphant death to die, a duty to be performed and an influence to be exerted every day and hour of our life, which is to affect the moral condition of the world, and our own eternal weight of glory.—Morning Star.

Gambling.

Multitudes fall into the vice of gambling—and it is strange, when they commence to learn the profession in mere childhood? They will take at first marbles, coppers, or even pins, and acquire a habit which is not easy afterwards to overcome. How often will you discover in the street all the interest and wrangling among boys, characteristic of older gamblers! and is it surprising that they should follow that for which they have been trained? They "will not depart from it."

This discipline may be commenced later in life. The attractions of a splendid saloon, the excitement of gaming for mere amusement, the buying now and then of a lottery ticket just to try one's luck, and the love of gain, frequently lead to the most disastrous consequences. They soon find that money at stake adds to the interest of the game. Success at first encourages them that they will soon be rich; and losses afterwards drive them to desperation, until, infatuated, they stake and lose the last dollar, pawn the last article of value in their possession and resort to dishonesty and crime to obtain something to lay down, if perchance they may retrieve their ruined fortunes. This is the experience of many "fast young men" and profligate clerks who have embroiled money to supply the demand, and brought ruin upon themselves and sorrow and disgrace upon their friends. They hoped fortune would turn in their favor, and they should be able to avoid the gulf which lay before them, but the die was cast, and cold, blank despair takes possession of them and they generally descend from one "hill" to

another until they reach the lowest "hill" of the profession, seeking to gratify to the last that insatiable passion which has ruined them.

"O vice accursed that lures thy victim on, With specious smiles, and false deluding hopes!" —(Morning Star.

"That Whosoever Believeth."

O glorious word "whosoever." You cannot escape from it. Wherever you fly it follows you. It expostulates with you. In the darkest corner of the dungeon of despair it whispers in your ear. "Whosoever!" It is heaven's great bell, summoning all men to the feast of salvation. Whosoever! Whosoever! Its boom swells throughout the whole earth, and breaks in as a reply to all your objections. "I have many doubts." Whosoever! "I'm a victim of necessity." Whosoever! "I'm a creature of circumstances." Whosoever! "I'm not one of the elect." Whosoever! "I fear Christ did not die for me." Whosoever! "I was never struck down with sorrow for sin." Whosoever! "I've been the greatest of sinners." Whosoever! "I've been a drunkard." Whosoever! "An adulterer." Whosoever! "A scorn of religion." Whosoever! "A thief and a murderer." Whosoever! "I've quenched the spirit." Whosoever! "I've crucified the Son of God afresh." Whosoever! Whosoever! Heaven and earth shall pass away but this word of Jesus shall not pass away, Whosoever! O then, "seek righteousness, seek meekness, it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger."—Plain Truths, by Newman Hall.

Making a Road to Hell!

"Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat."—Matt vii. 13.

A young gardener in Scotland was busy leveling a road from his ledge at the entrance of a gentleman's grounds, to the Mansion House, when he was seized with a dangerous illness, and brought to look death and judgment in the face. Some friends who came to see him sought to raise his spirits by referring to his work,—saying:—"We hope you will soon be able to rise and finish the road?" Opening his eyes with a wild and agonizing look, he replied—"I have been making a road to hell! His friends left him, fearing that his reason had fled for ever. In a few weeks, however, he was seen, and emancipated, walking slowly down the avenue among the trees, in deep and silent meditation. He had risen from a sick bed to look back upon a life spent without God—in other words, he saw that by an unholy life he had been engaged for 29 years in making for himself a road to hell! In this awful state of mind he opened his neglected Bible, where he read, "Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith," the scales of unbelief fell from his eyes, and the light from heaven broke in, he saw Jesus to be the way, the truth and the life, and rejoiced, believing in God his Saviour; from that hour he became in heart a Missionary. Young men and women beware lest you be making for yourselves and others a road to hell. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Tests of Declension.

Like mortification in the body, religious declension in the soul is attended with no indications by which it may be discovered by the patient himself.

The conscience may be still at ease, The spirits light and gay;
That which is pleasing still may please, And care be thrust away.

But on that forehead God has set Indelibly, a mark
Unseen by man, for man as yet Is blind and in the dark.

There are, however, a few causes by which such a state may be produced, which we will briefly notice. The discovery of the causes may serve to anticipate the disease.

1. Constant association with careless professors. Duty will carry us in the world, but only sin makes us of the world. The question is not, are our relations or our business acquaintances worldly. But are our chosen friends so. The first is consistent with a state of grace—the second never so.
 2. Vanity. If we do not estimate this, it may bleed us to death. "If a man is naturally vain," says Cecil, "he will be in danger of sacrificing everything to a name."
 3. A tendency to speculate in money matters. This often precipitates a fall. It drags us into boon companionship with men whose idol is gold. It eats into that quiet which is essential to prayer. It damages us in the judgment of others, and when we know others think we are sinking, we are apt to sink. And it often drags us into practices inconsistent with Christian integrity.
 4. Going to distinctively worldly amusements.
 5. Indulging some continually besetting sin. Soon this corrupts our whole standard of truth. We make a new Gospel to make this sin permissible. And this new Gospel gives us a new Master.
- It is true that sometimes this besetting sin is