THE WEST CHINA MISSIONARY NEWS.

VOL. X. FEBRUARY, 1908. No. 2.

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FEBRUARY, 1908.

THE CONFERENCE.

The West China Conference, for which we have planned long and prayed much, is in session as we go to press.

Bright blue skies and warm sunshine have cheered the travellers as they journeyed during the month of January from the province of Yunnan, and from all points of the compass in Szchuan, towards the place of meeting, Chentu. Some in boats and some in sedan chairs, some afoot and some on horseback, men and women, maidens and matrons, all were animated with the feverish desire to shorten the distance as rapidly as possible between them and the provincial capital.

There were marked signs, for two or three days, of "something doing in Chentu," as the incoming caravans became more and more frequent, culminating on Saturday, January 25th, in one final grand irruption of whole streets-full of foreigners all at once!

The Conference Booklet is a mine of information to residents and non-residents alike. Much credit is due to the committee which arranged it, and to the Press which printed it. This last remark is equally applicable to the hymn book specially prepared for Conference use.
Here one and there one, they were tucked away in the cracks and crannies of the homes of the Chentu community, until the very last one was provided for; and it is credibly reported that in the house with 13 guests there is still room for one more!

We are all deeply indebted to Dr. Canright and to the M.E. Mission for their kindness in placing their fine new hospital building at the disposal of the Conference. The structure, which is not yet altogether completed, and has not yet been used for hospital purposes, lends itself admirably to Conference requirements. There are committee rooms and cloak rooms, a missionary exhibit room, and a branch of the Chinese Imperial Post Office with English-speaking Chinese clerk in constant attendance. There is a large room used as dining-room, where a midday lunch is served to all delegates. All sessions of the Conference are being held in the capacious chapel of the hospital.

Never in the history of missions in the West has there been such an inspiring meeting as that of the evening of Jan. 25th, when 160 foreign missionaries, men and women, gathered for the first session in the hospital chapel. There was great pleasure in greeting old friends and acquaintances, for the first time, it may be, for many years. Many familiar names grew into a reality as we grasped the hands of the owners for the first time. There was a joyous heartiness about them all—the whole 160—and at the same time a quiet devotion of spirit, manifest in song and prayer, which augur well for the spiritual tone the Conference will take on.

Presently, as the first session was fairly opened, and business was taken up, and many details of organization steadily and systematically disposed of, we were convinced that the business capacity of the Conference would leave nothing to be desired in this direction.

Mr. Grainger, chairman of the Conference Committee, was unanimously chosen to occupy the chair during this first session. The ballot resulted in the election of Bishop W. W. Cassels and the Rev. J. Taylor of Yachow as permanent chairmen of the Conference. Other officers elected were Dr. O. L. Kilborn as vice-chairman, and Dr. H. T. Hodgkin and the Rev. J. L. Stewart as secretaries.

It was decided that a full report of the proceedings of Conference be published, and Rev. J. Neave consented to take shorthand reports with the valuable assistance of others.

A cordial welcome was extended to all visitors who have travelled to the Conference from outside the boundaries of the three western provinces. Among these are Rev. D. E. Hoste,
C.I.M., Shanghai: Dr. Arthur H. Smith, of Shantung; Bishop J. W. Bashford, of the M.E.M.; Mr. W. B. Sloan, as Keswick Deputation; Rev. G. J. Bond, of Toronto, Canada; Miss Brook, Miss Burbridge, Mrs. Roe, and Miss Lachlan, and Mr. H. S. Elliott.

The News joins in the hearty welcome to all delegates to the Conference. We confidently look for and believe that we, with all West China missionaries, shall receive through these gatherings a Divine inspiration which shall manifest itself in renewed devotion to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

CHENTU ANTI-FOOTBINDING SOCIETY.

The Annual Meeting of the above society was held on Thursday evening, the 9th January, 1908, Dr. H. T. Hodgkin being in the chair.

The following report for the past year was presented, and having been read, it was, on the motion of Mrs. Canright, seconded by Mrs. Robertson, unanimously adopted.

In thus ceasing to exist as a separate Society, it must not be supposed that the zeal of the Chentu missionaries in the cause of Anti-footbinding has at all lessened. It is simply a re-adjustment of our working forces, and an endeavour to keep up with the times, in an intelligent appreciation of progress made.

As a next step, we hope that in the near future plans may be adopted to keep a vigorous watch for needs for various social reforms in general, rather than one only in particular, for, while thankful for all real progress made, we can also freely confess that “there remains yet much land to be possessed.”

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1907.

We rejoice in being able to report our firm belief that the past year has seen much progress in favour of the Natural Foot for Chinese women, in the city of Chentu.

As a committee we have endeavoured to do all we could in furtherance of the cause. In May last a large meeting was held in the Shan Si Kai Chapel. It was advertised for three days previously in the daily newspaper, and was well attended by the
women and girls of our various Missions. A large quantity of literature was handed to each adult present, with the request that it might be distributed amongst those who might not yet be convinced of the value of the Natural Foot. A good deal of effort was spent to make the meeting a success. Tea was provided for the early comers in a separate room, and at the meeting in the chapel the Vice-President took the chair, a Christian Chinese woman gave an address, another engaged in prayer, a third read a portion of Scripture, and a fourth presided at the organ. Several hymns were sung by the school girls, and a quartette was well rendered, and much appreciated. Yet, on reviewing the effort, we found there was hardly one person present with a bound foot, and consequently little need of persuasive advocacy of our cause!

Two gentlemen on the Committee were also appointed to try to ventilate the subject amongst men, some of us feeling very strongly that when they once desire their brides and daughters to have natural feet, the victory is nine-tenths won. But they failed to discover any suitable opportunity, or any new feature of the movement to advocate.

Beyond this, little else has been done by us collectively, but very encouraging information can be given of individual effort, and of success, both in personal knowledge of numbers who have unbound their feet, and of help given to many in their desire to purchase foreign shoes, or better and more suitable kinds of Chinese ones.

We are convinced that in this city there is a continued and increasing intention to unbind the feet of adults, and not to commence binding those of the rising generation, more especially of the upper classes. We also know of whole classes of enquirers and Church members where every woman has unbound feet; while the native schools in this city are, in this respect, not one whit behind the Mission schools. So that we feel the maintenance of the Natural Foot is an established fashion in Chentu, that it has come to stay amongst the upper classes, and will therefore certainly spread to all the others.

We greatly rejoice at this step forward, and, in doing so, let us remember, and give thanks for each one of the earnest pioneers who have preceded us, and through evil report and good have used their influence to alter public and private opinion in favor of the liberty of the feet of the women and girls of this great city. We believe the Anti-footbinding Society has done much good and useful work in the past, but we must all be glad when this or any other good work is taken up and advanced by the Chinese themselves, apart from the foreigner.
As one proof of the stand now being taken in this city, we may mention that on the occasion of the recent athletic sports in connection with the Provincial University, a special public notice was put up at the entrance to the grounds, to the effect that no lady would be permitted to enter to see the sports who did not have unbound feet! Students are also beginning to desire wives with some education, and with natural feet!

In view of these facts as we see them, and of the many very pressing claims upon the time and strength of missionaries, we desire to submit the question whether the time has not now come for us to cease to exist as a special Committee for special efforts against foot-binding, more especially as there is also another similar society represented in this city, which is more intimately connected with the Chinese themselves.

In making this suggestion, we take for granted that every individual foreigner in the community will still feel it his or her bounden duty to support public opinion in favor of the Natural Foot, and that the many who have always been on the look-out for such opportunities will in no wise be discouraged from doing so still, but will rather continue their vigilance, and "keep the ball rolling," so that the good progress made in Chentu may go on, and spread also to many other parts of the province.

(Signed on behalf of the Committee),

MAUD NEAVE, Vice-President.
MARY J. DAVIDSON, Secretary.
MARY A. SIMESTER.
CHARLOTTE A. BROOKS.
A. GRAINGER.
JOHN W. YOST.

Chentu, January, 1908.
I can scarcely realize that another year has passed; it seems only a few months since we sent in our statement and report for the year 1906.

Being so much of the time on the road may account for it; for when I come to review the year, I find that very little over two months were spent at headquarters. The rest of the time we have been moving about the country; for the most part about the Master's business on the field, the exception being the time spent in visiting the Shanghai Conference, for which we left our headquarters on the 20th of March and did not return until the 12th of July.

This was not all lost time to the Sub-agency, however, for we were able to visit a good many stations while on the journey, and attend to some business matters, as well as sell some books while en route, especially on the up journey; for although it was accomplished in the midst of many obstacles and dangers, yet we have many things to thank God for.

When we review the ten months of our wanderings, surrounded by many seen and unseen dangers, we do offer him our most sincere thanks for the wonderful way He has kept us. The best of health has been our lot; and while there have been a few hardships connected with some of the journeys, especially the one among the Tribes to the north-west, when “damper” was our only food for days; yet, He who is able to keep has kept us through all the way, and we can only acknowledge His gracious care and give Him praise for all His goodness. When we think of the work we have been entrusted with—“the scattering of the good seed broad-cast over the land”—we must again give God thanks.

First, for the men He has given us—for without them the sowing could not have been done, at least not to the extent that it has. During the year we have had men doing systematic work in many of the prefectures of the province. Our aim has been to visit all the markets, at least once; but this is yet far from being accomplished.
More might have been done if we had not been on the road so much; and yet the men have been kept to regular work. They have been under the care of missionaries, and a great many cities and towns have been visited; and we can really say that not a single complaint has come in against any of our colporteurs.

During the year under review, we have circulated one hundred and three thousand four hundred and twenty-four Scriptures. For the men and for the work accomplished we give God thanks, and we look for still better results in the coming year.

The missionaries have everywhere helped us in this work of circulating the written page; first, by supplying men, more than we could use, with our present allotted funds; and also by lending a willing hand to supervise the men.

The year has been a busy one for the agent, as on each occasion on returning home we found work piled up, which meant early and late hours until it was overtaken; and on most occasions this was not accomplished before we had to be on the road again. Yet it has been a joy to me to do what I could to put the one hundred thousand Scriptures into circulation; and though we have not accomplished all we had hoped for, yet we at least feel our labor has not been in vain, and we close the year with the confidence that there is still a greater work to be done. God helping us, we are aiming to do it.

We especially thank Mr. Hartwell and Dr. Kilborn for so kindly looking after the Depot during our absence from Chentu; in fact, we have found the missionaries everywhere most ready to co-operate in the great work of putting the written page into the hands of the people throughout the province.

Total contributions from all sources during the year 1907, $227.50

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Chentu, Dec. 31st, 1907.

W. N. Fergusson.
LONG, TANG, WANG—THREE PIONEERS.

By J. Vale (contd.).

III.—Wang—Coolie, Cook, Evangelist, Pastor.

A year or two after the return of Mr. Wang to Tanling, the subject of his support was discussed, and it was suggested that the Church there was strong enough to undertake his support themselves, and thus relieve the funds of the Mission. The matter was brought before the Church, and they agreed to give rice or money sufficient to support Mr. Wang and his family. At this time Mr. Wang was set apart as Pastor for the Tanling Church; so in future we shall speak of him as Pastor Wang.

The first year after his support was undertaken by the local Church, sufficient money or rice was supplied. But the following years were very dry and the crops not good, and the amount subscribed was insufficient for his support. Some of the less spiritually-minded amongst the Church members who supported Pastor Wang supposed that because he was now supported by the local Church, therefore he must help them in every petty trouble that arose, and stand by them in their lawsuits, etc. When they discovered that he was not there for that purpose, and that little help was to be expected from him in that line, their zeal for his support declined considerably. Thus the amount available for his support fluctuated during the few years preceding the Boxer outbreak in 1900. During these troubles twenty-five families were robbed of all they possessed by bands of robbers who were encouraged by the indifference of the magistrate then in office at Tanling. At this time, and for some weeks after, Pastor Wang was in great danger of losing his life. The robbers tried with ladders to scale the city walls at night, but were prevented from so doing by a friendly military official residing in the same street with Pastor Wang. This official took Pastor Wang and his family into his own home, and shielded them from all harm during the troublesome weeks which followed the Boxer rising in this district.

For some months after this experience, Pastor Wang, whose nerves were severely shaken, gave way to despondency. At
times he got so low that he requested that he might die and be
gathered to his fathers. Many a time during the next year or
two when I visited Tanling, I found that Pastor Wang was sick
in bed, and not expected to live. On these occasions I found
him very low and dispirited, but a talk of old exploits and a
cheery word about future work would stir the blood of the old
warrior, and he would rise from his bed and say he was fit for
any new work I wished him to undertake! I discovered that
the only way to keep him from lying down and actually courting
death was to give him plenty of work to do. He was never
happier than when he was given some difficult task to perform.
I found his help most valuable on many occasions when I have
been in a fix with some difficult problem in the work.

The next good work Pastor Wang performed was to assist
Mr. Olsen to purchase a house at Kiongcheo. Having done
good service there, he was transferred to Penshan to put new life
into that Church. The evangelist, Mr. Ho, who had done such
good work at Penshan having died, three deacons were ap­
pointed to carry on the work till such times as we had another
evangelist to put in his place. These deacons were not a success
by any means, and the Church was in danger of becoming a
veritable "Cave of Adullam." Pastor Wang, by his tact, threats,
and teaching, succeeded in harmonizing the various factions.
He won the confidence of the more spiritually minded, and he
reached the outsiders with the Gospel.

During his stay at Penshan, we had a recrudescence of
Boxerism in Szchuan, especially in the north-east and south-west
of the province. Penshan was one of the first places to suffer
in the south-west. The official, who was bitterly anti-foreign,
allowed the Boxers from Kiangkeo, a place ten 里 from Penshan,
to pass through the city, and gave them Tls. 150 on condition
that they did no damage as they passed through! Pastor Wang,
after his trying experiences at Tanling, was naturally somewhat
frightened on hearing that the Boxers were to be allowed to pass
through the city. He therefore thought best to close the Gospel
Hall for the time being, and to hand it over to the care of the
official. After closing the Gospel Hall, he took boat to Kiating,
where he and his family took shelter for several weeks.

Pastor Wang had not had a furlough for fifteen years, and
he needed a rest after the excitement of the past weeks. It was
thought best, therefore, that he should with his family, return to
Chungking, his native place, for a few months' rest and change.
When he left Kiating, I had serious doubts about his ever being
able to return. But after the few months, he came back to
Penshan quite bright and hopeful.
In the meantime, things at Tanling had not gone on quite so smoothly as we could have wished. The deacons in charge did their best to keep things straight, but it was a case of "too many cooks," and the Church was in danger of being scattered. When it was suggested that Mr. Wang should return to Tanling, the Church at Penshan did not want him to go; so we said, "Very well; if you will call him as your pastor, and provide for his support, he may stay, and we will appoint someone else to Tanling." Their zeal however did not amount to this; so Mr. Wang and his family returned to Tanling, and were heartily welcomed by the whole Church. Since his return to Tanling, Pastor Wang has been sent on several small commissions, such as settling disputes, harmonising discordant elements, and helping forward the cause of Christ in several places; but he has not resided at any one place long enough to make it worth while noticing in this short sketch.

The Church in Tanling is growing steadily under the care of Pastor Wang. The present membership is over 100, and there are about 80 enquirers. In the spring of 1907 Pastor Wang had a severe illness, and was confined to his bed for some weeks. At one time he was unconscious, and his coffin was ordered, in accordance with Chinese custom. Although the coffin-maker had carefully taken the measurements, yet in cutting the wood he made a mistake in the length by several inches. When the family heard of this mistake, they at once took it for a good omen, and declared that he would not die! Sure enough he did not die, and we trust will still live to do good work for Christ in Tanling and district.

In closing this sketch, it might be well to add a few words as to Mr. Wang's character. But for the grace of God he would have been a most unruly man; and even with that grace, he has had some hard battles to fight with his old nature. Though failure has sometimes overtaken him, yet on the whole he has shown what Christ can do for them that wholly trust Him.

He has had a great many trials during his life. Some seven children have been taken away from them during the last twenty years. The greatest loss of all was the death of his son at the age of eighteen. This young fellow was following in the footsteps of his father, and was becoming a useful evangelist in Chentu, when he was struck down by fever and died in a few days. This was the blow of blows to Pastor Wang, and for months he was as one dazed. But gradually he recovered, and though he had passed through the fire of trial and testing, he still proved faithful in his allegiance to Christ, and in his zeal for the spread of His Kingdom.
Pastor Wang could not for many years overcome his native prejudice against girls—regarding them as a burden and a nuisance—while boys were hailed as a blessing to the family. On one occasion he told me a story he had heard of an evangelist in a down-river province which seemed to express his own feelings in the matter. This evangelist, on the birth of number seven daughter into his family, was heard to say, “Truly God's grace is inexhaustible!” Later years have mellowed much of the natural hardness of his nature, and as he borders on threescore and ten, he is much more approachable than in his earlier years.

Straightforwardness and fearlessness have always been prominent characteristics in Pastor Wang. We all know how difficult it is to get a Chinese to speak out boldly and to stick to what he does say. Pastor Wang was ever tactful and wise in dealing with difficulties, but whenever he discovered the wrong-doer in any case, he always acted in a straightforward manner, and was ever respected for his desire to do justice at whatever cost. Always ambitious, and naturally given to leading men, some missionaries and many native helpers have found Pastor Wang somewhat hard to get on with. But whatever mistakes he may have made in this line, all are willing to admit that he was always seeking the best interests of the work, and desirous to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ and his salvation. Pastor Hsi was his ideal of a worker for Christ, and it seemed to be his ambition to be a Pastor Hsi in Szechuan. His gifts, though great, are far below those of his ideal. Still at the present time there is no other man so well known in the Church in Western Szechuan as Pastor Wang; and certainly, so far as my knowledge goes, no one is worthier.

Let us watch and pray for such men, who shall be leaders and guides of the future Church of Christ in this vast province! "He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." He still gives such. Let us be quick to discern them in this part of His vineyard!

(The End.)
RENSHOW BIBLE SCHOOL.

This year as usual we had our annual district class or school the week preceding Christmas. From year to year the number in attendance has grown until this year we felt that the largest problem might be just how to control, in one class, so large a number, some one hundred and nine from outstations, besides fifteen or more from the city here. But in this we were agreeably surprised; the men studied faithfully, and otherwise behaved very well indeed.

Not only was the number in attendance encouraging, but the attendance was representative of the district. All places in which chapels are opened, sent at least a few representatives; only a few places sent over ten members, while most sent from two to six or seven.

We required the men to rise on the sounding of a gong at half-past six in the morning, and immediately begin the study of the Psalms; then, from seven to eight the pastor held morning service and heard them repeat one Psalm each morning. All could not be heard to recite, but all were to be prepared, and ten were chosen by lot. No one knew who was to be called on till the moment of reciting. From eight to half-past eight was their breakfast time; then Dr. Cox took morning prayers and the Sunday School lesson with them. Following this, the pastor took them in charge, to study the Old Testament, with the exception of four or five days, when Dr. Cox took them from half-past eleven to twelve in the study of Geography.

From twelve to one was looked upon as leisure hour or study, as each one chose. For the remainder of the afternoon up to four o'clock, they studied the New Testament catechism. From four to five a number were taken over each day to have a look at the foreign residence, and then from five to six Mr. Wallace kindly consented to give them singing. At seven o'clock the public service began.

One thing we have found very advantageous in connection with these classes, is that all board and lodge on the place. It is not always easy to maintain perfect harmony in so doing, but this year we were glad to find that even so large a number as this could get along agreeably in such crowded circumstances. Next year, or rather this year now, I think it will be almost
necessary to divide the district into sections for class work during the year, with perhaps a central class at the end of the year.

Following the study class came the Christmas entertainment, and about this I need not say much, for all have their own. The Chinese provided dinner for some twenty of the poor, while the foreigners provided for a considerably larger number. In the evening a tree was prepared for the boys of the two schools (two day schools), followed by lantern views.

I should perhaps have said that on the Sunday during class, we baptized some fifty-four. This was a large number, but they represented the district, and that for the whole year. Each was first tested as to his knowledge of the Bible, and then vouched for by those in attendance from their several chapels.

A. C. H.
STILL YET ANOTHER SPECIAL EFFORT IN CHENTU.

By J. Vale.

Readers of the West China News who have read the three articles on special efforts in Chentu, will remember that I promised still one more article on this subject. This particular effort will close the series for the current Chinese year. If I am able to continue these special efforts in the coming year, I shall have to commence over again, or invent another name, as I have exhausted my list of words available as prefixes to "special."

The monthly special Gospel meetings have continued month by month without intermission, from the second to the ninth. When the weather was favorable the attendance was encouraging, and the interest manifest, considerable. One young apprentice was regular in his attendance every month. It appears that he is unable to attend any meetings held in the daytime, but always endeavors to get to our monthly Gospel meetings. Another man has also attended regularly, not only these meetings, but also our Sunday services. We are praying that these may come out for Christ; but past experience warns us "to lay hands suddenly on no man."

Having given the northern district eight months, it is my intention to turn to two other parts of our district during the months of November and December; and then finish up during the Chinese New Year with 14 days' special meetings in our northern district, i.e., in our Mission chapel.

We have four street chapels, situated in four busy quarters of our district. These are opened daily by the students of the Bible School, who preach from 3 to 5 p.m. to outsiders who may come in. One of these four chapels is unsuitable for large meetings and the other is our Book Room in the northern district. One of the remaining two is situated in the Drum Tower Street, a busy thoroughfare running north and south through the centre of the city. The fourth is a chapel opened by Mr. Ramsay, of the American Bible Society, in front of his dwelling, and kindly placed at the disposal of the Chentu Bible School for a preaching centre.

Through the kindness of Mr. Ramsay, I hope to hold a week's Gospel meetings in this chapel during the month of November. These meetings will be well advertised on the streets.
immediately surrounding that district, so that all may have
an opportunity to attend who wish. During the week 500
gospels, with 500 tracts (Introduction to the Bible), and 500
slips announcing the place and time of the special meeting, will
be given from shop to shop in the streets near the chapel. During
the meetings 100 gospel tracts, and 100 little books on the “Main
Themes of the Gospel” will be distributed to those who attend.

I hope by these means to touch an entirely new audience,
and to create an interest amongst the people who live away from
our north gate Mission House. By holding night meetings too,
I hope to reach the tradespeople and shopkeepers who are not
touched by the preaching of the Bible students during the day.

The second part of our second special effort will be carried
out during December. This will be in the Drum Tower Street
street-chapel and district. But as it will be the exact counterpart
of that described above, I need not repeat.

The third and last part of our second special effort (at this
time) will be at the north gate Mission House. During the first
fifteen days of the Chinese New Year thousands of shopkeepers,
assistants and apprentices are on holiday, and spend a great deal
of their time parading the streets, or sitting in the teashops.
I hope therefore to distribute the 500 gospels and tracts at the
close of the Old Year. Then during the first two weeks of the
New Year, I shall hold fourteen days’ special Gospel meetings in
the evenings, in order to reach this class who have leisure at that
particular time.

I am glad to hear that other workers who have heard of
these special efforts are planning to carry on a similar work in
their respective spheres. I am also pleased to know that many
are prayerfully following our efforts to reach the unreached
classes of this great city. After all these special efforts, what
have we really done to reach the 80,000 souls in our C.I.M.
district of this city?

I am grateful for the practical help of those friends who
have placed the funds at my disposal. If I am entrusted with
further funds, I shall devise some new scheme for the coming
Chinese New Year, by which we can reach others not reached
by the four special efforts carried out thus far. But I will not
anticipate.
A NEW MISSIONARY SUPPLY ASSOCIATION AND AGENCY.

We understand that arrangements will soon be made to establish an Association for effecting economies of missionary time and money in China. It is intended to undertake a Missionary Bureau for advice on all business matters relative to Mission Work, for the supply of all kinds of information concerning Missions, and an Intelligence Department on China; a Supply Department to provide Household Stores, Materials for Clothing, Mission School Requisites, Miscellaneous Sundries, Medical Stores, and to act as a general purchasing agency. It will have the support and advice of influential laymen on both sides of the Atlantic. It is to be exclusively the servant of missions and missionaries and is to be absolutely free from the personal money-making element. There will be a yearly independent public audit. Prices will be kept as near wholesale and export rates as running expenses will permit.

The gentlemen who are moving in this matter are Mr. Sidney J. W. Clark of England, Mr. C. H. Vickrey of America, and Mr. T. Gear Willett of China. As so many laymen are deeply interested in the economy of Missions it is felt this will be a work which will lead to the hearty co-operation and union of the Laymens' Missionary Movement in America and England. The Association will have no connection with any Missionary Society but will be exclusively an independent contribution from businessmen interested in the organization of missionary work and enterprise.
Dr. Arthur Smith, I believe, has said that *cha puh to* is the bane of China. It would be impertinence for a tenderfoot to assume to endorse that statement of so acute and experienced an observer of things Chinese. But the force of the remark has impressed me a thousand times during the month or two that I have been in this country. Nothing strikes a stranger more than the way in which things are, as we say, "made to do." Appliances which in other countries are fashioned with the very utmost of perfection and permanence, are in China put together in an absurdly tentative and temporary way. What an Englishman, or a Canadian, or an American would invariably spend all the time at his disposal in making as solid and secure as possible, a Chinese, apparently as invariably, throws together in a haphazard and hurried fashion, the product of which may indeed "do," and often does work with extraordinary ease and competency, but is not only deplorably slovenly in appearance, but liable to fail at some crucial juncture. How many times, both while on the Yangtse and in travelling overland, have I been amused—when I was not annoyed, and even jeopardised—by this national characteristic.

The reflex influence of this sort of thing upon the Chinese character must be sinister in the extreme. To be habitually not far from the right in things material, and to be perfectly content with that position, inevitably works havoc with the moral sense. Absolute rectitude of moral ideal and aim is either lost sight of altogether or regarded as a matter indifferent if not impossible, and all moral soundness is gone. Conscience comes to have no higher standard than *cha puh to*, and life is reduced to a huge gamble. The man who clamps his rudder together with spurse nails, and risks his junk and cargo on a rapid with a thin old rope, pursues the same policy of haphazard in that infinitely more serious and dangerous voyage which every man of us on earth has to make for himself.

For China, not in things material alone, but much more in things intellectual and moral, it is surely in order to pray and work for the downfall of *cha puh to*, and the hastening of the era of the absolute right in ideal, and as near an approximation to it in aim and act as grace makes possible to human nature.

G. J. B.
The new rules relating to the restriction of the use of opium, though but partially carried out here, have not been without some good effect. The dens are closed, and opium is supposed to be obtainable from the Government office only. It is reported that a good many people have given up smoking. We have heard of several elderly people using native cures succumbing from the effects. Six patients have been here recently, breaking off the smoking habit. Four of these were the fathers of school boys.

Since we last sent notes, twenty-three persons have been baptized. Nine of these were received in July, and fourteen on Nov. 17th, by Bishop Cassels. Of the latter, five were school boys who had been with us two years and more. One of them is the son of the military official at Yingshan. His father knows the Gospel well, and gave his full consent.

The Sunday services are fairly well attended, the proportion of city and country people being about equal.

We had the privilege of Mr. Sloan’s presence here for one evening and a whole day. His messages came with power to those who heard them. We have been remembering the Conference daily in prayer, and are looking forward with expectation for much blessing for all the stations, as the outcome of these special meetings.

Want of time at close of November kept us from sending our monthly report, and this will cover December month as well. They have both been exceptionally busy months and the strain has told on the workers not a little.

Christmas season has just gone, and there is no question but that the Christians at Wanhsien know how to go in for keeping Christmas. Our courtyard and doorway were very prettily decorated with arches and awnings of various colors.
Some 150 lamps were burning at night in lanterns of all shapes. Feasts at some 30-odd tables, and in the evening the usual magic lantern exhibition. Close on 3000 people squeezed into the church, courtyard, and galleries, and it was a good orderly crowd which listened to the story of the Pilgrim's Progress for nearly an hour.

During December we have visited all the outstations for the purpose of administering the sacraments, and had baptisms at each place. We find on totalling for the year, that for Wanhsien we have baptized 79 adults, and received a further 80 fresh candidates for baptism. We thank God for this, and will press on into a new year, looking for greater things.

We have also opened our new mission church in the city's "upper" ward (上). Our former place for meeting in that ward had become enclosed on three sides by opium dens, so that it was impossible to hold a service out of the reach of opium fumes. This was very objectionable to all. Our present place is higher up from the river side, a nice quiet spot, and will hold some 120 people. We can now administer all the rites of our Church there, and it is on the footing of an independent outstation.

We have had H.M.S. Woodlark with us, and it has been not a little pleasing to hold service on board each Sunday morning.1

Many visitors have passed through, among them Mr. Hoste and Mr. Walter Sloan, Mr. Fergusson, Broomhalls, Riries, etc., and we have much valued intercourse with them.

The one dark shadow has been Miss R. Allen's illness at Liangshan Hsien. As we write she is lying prostrate with typhoid fever, and as the present is a relapse, she is in a very weak and dangerous condition. Miss A. Evans has had to give up her work here for the time being, and go to nurse the patient. It is only just over twelve months since Miss E. J. Douglas-Hamilton died of typhus in that same city.

We have all been kept well in this station, save Kathy, our little girl. She has been very ill with malaria, but as we write, all are in health.

LIST OF CONFERENCE DELEGATES.

Next issue will contain a complete list of delegates and visitors in attendance at the Conference, besides as full a report of Conference proceedings as our space will allow.—Ed.]

BIRTHS.

GRAINGER.—At Chentu, on 21st December, 1907, to Mr. and Mrs. Grainger, a daughter—Florence Violet.

NEAVE.—At Chentu, on 8th January, 1908, to the Rev. J. and Mrs. Neave, a daughter—Ada Heartz.

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