

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

## NOTES FROM FORMOSA

[The following interesting letter from Rev. K. F. Junor, has been handed us by the Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee, and we make room for it with pleasure, feeling certain our readers will peruse the details therein given with unmixed satisfaction.—Ed. C. P.]

MY DEAR BROTHER. It is now a long time since I wrote you last and a long time since we heard from you. Our delay has been caused by our taking a trip round the stations and my desire to send you as full an account as possible of our trip. I will mention sometimes small details that may seem insignificant, but I believe you will get a very much better notion of the mission and of our life. For some time it had been contemplated that Mrs. J. should take a trip through the stations as she was anxious to see them. We arranged for starting on Tuesday, 19th of Nov. but I had a severe attack of fever for four or five days previous, so that we could not. On Wednesday however we determined to start. We had prepared provisions for two weeks and had everything ready, but we could not procure coolies to carry the chairs.

But let me describe more particularly. First, a sedan chair. Imagine two long bamboo poles, eighteen feet long, and suspended between them a square basket chair about four and a-half feet long and two feet wide, with four upright bamboo poles on which rests a roof or cover, from which roof hang curtains of water-proof cloth, and you have a sedan chair. The colour is green. Put three Chinese coolies, two before and one behind, with these poles on their shoulders, and you are ready for the road. The chair is easily procured but without the coolies it is of little use, and they are difficult to procure. Some of your readers may think I exaggerate when I say that it is utterly impossible to describe the vexations and annoyances they bring you. You can't travel without them, unless you walk, which Mr. McKay has preferred to do mostly, but he is a perfect Hercules to walk, and will walk any ten men blind in a few days, if they try to keep up with him.

We next had to prepare places for carrying provisions, clothes, etc., for a two weeks' journey. These are four baskets, in sections, and water-proof. One coolie carries two of these suspended from a bamboo pole. Each weighs perhaps from thirty to forty pounds.

We were detained for three days by the scheming and trickery of the coolies. They knew we wanted to go, and they banded together to ask exorbitant prices, which I would not give. It is an actual fact that one of these men will waste a whole day in dispute for no higher a sum than a few *cash* (a *cash* 1-12 of a cent.) On Friday, the 22nd, we got started, but not till 9 a. m. whereas all had agreed the previous night to be ready by 6 a. m. To the very last minute they tried to extort a few more *cash*, refusing to move on this and that paltry excuse, the final one being that it was now too late, and that they would not get the first stage done before dark. They of course wanted higher pay for travelling after dark. Oh, the exasperation! If only one could be independent of them, if you could go by horse or mule or ox or any way. If alone, I could manage, but I was comparatively at their mercy. We got started however at 9 a. m. as I have said.

We go down to the river and cross in a boat, and set off across the rice fields for Tiong-lek, our first stopping place, twenty miles distant. In half an hour we come to the Pat-li-hun chapel, at which, however, we do not stop. For an hour and a half we continue travelling through rice fields. Here let me describe the district of the Pat-li-hun chapel, a good illustration of the Chinese method of cultivation. Opposite our house and across the river is a hill or mountain 3,000 feet high, behind which, to the south stretches for fifteen miles a level table land from 1,000 to 800 feet high. To the right of our house, across the river, and between this table land and the sea, is a low plain about three miles by five or six. This is the "Pat-li-hun" district, and in the centre is the chapel. From the table land side of this valley run down streams, through deep gorges into the plain. These streams are dammed up and reservoirs formed. The whole plain is carefully laid out in terraces. These terraces, one or more, or *all*, can be flooded at any time from these reservoirs, the water running from one terrace to another. This is the method of irrigation all over the north of Formosa. The rice (usually two crops in the

year) is planted, then the land is flooded till the rice is about ripe, when the water is allowed to run off. The roads through this valley (and similarly in all the valleys) consists simply of the embankment artificially thrown up between the different lots or farms on these terraces. There are no fences here, except some few of bamboo, lots being divided by these embankments, some of them about one and a-half, others two feet in width. Along such a road we travel for an hour and a half when we turn off to ascend to the table land. It is a hard and steep ascent, but when descended, from the top the sight is grand. Looking along the edge of the table land you see it cut by deep gorges, each sending its quota of refreshing, life giving water to the plain below. Looking out to sea, between you and it stretches the lovely valley, laid out with faultless regularity and dotted here and there with clumps of trees in the midst of which are the houses of the inhabitants. After pausing a few minutes to look at scene, we start off across the table land through fields of tea and potatoes, corn and sugar cane. Here is a good road on which a carriage might travel. At twelve we halt behind a fence of tall grass and sit down for dinner. In half an hour we are off again. At 1 p. m. we are rejoiced to meet Mr McKay coming to meet us. About 3 p. m. we come to the edge of the table land and look down on a beautiful valley stretching away to the south west towards the sea. Descending, we turn away to the south-east through a winding path between low hills, and in a short time come out into another valley. Entering this valley and upon the main road between Bangka and Tiong-lek we pass on towards the latter place, which we reach about dusk. Before reaching Tiong-lek we come to quite a large *Hakka* town. The *Hakkas* are emigrants from the more northern provinces of China and keep pretty distinct from the other peoples of Formosa.

In Tiong-lek is the best hotel in Formosa. When I speak of a hotel I know you have no more idea of the thing than if it were in the moon, so I will describe. We stopped on the street and in the midst of a great crowd. The hotel seems to consist of two houses, one behind the other, with an interval of twenty feet between them. This interval, saving a space of twenty feet square, is covered in and divided into little berths of about four or five feet square, in each of which are stretched a few boards for a bed for guests. Mr. McKay had secured for our party a suite of rooms which I shall attempt to describe, premising that they were the best in the establishment. The buildings were all of mud bricks, the floors of mother earth. Off the open space above mentioned, and in the house most remote from the street was a kind of court opening on this open square. In this were a table, four chairs and a small mud fire-place for cooking. Off this room were four of the above mentioned little bedrooms, two of them having two beds, very much like a berth in a steamer. Our room was a little larger than the rest, being about five by seven. The open room was our kitchen and dining-room, and although the pigs failed, despite repeated drivings, to forego their ancient right of possession, but quietly (as possible) and persistently (as was natural) fed under the table and chairs, yet we felt our lot so much above the thousands, we said that we were thankful and full of content. Mrs. McKay's cook prepared tea. After tea we had a fearful time with coolies. We wished to get new chair and burden coolies at cheaper rates and send the Tamsui ones about their business for their ill-conduct. It took till twelve o'clock before we could approach anything like satisfaction for the morning's start at six a. m. I assure you it takes an experience of travelling here to make a man understand the almost infinite and infinitesimal difficulties that made such a *world of care* to such men as Livingstone. We were up at half past four a. m. and off at half past six a. m., glad to get out of the filth of the hotel to take breakfast somewhere on the side of the road. By the way I forgot to say how the rooms were lighted. In each room was a little stand or rack, on top of which was a small tin saucer, in which was the oil for fluid and a little strip of wood pith for wick. As it burned you shoved it out to the edge of the saucer. The two beds, a small table and the above lamp constituted the furniture of the room, everything else needed on the journey must either be carried or you must do without. Thursday, twenty-third, at half past six a. m., we are off for Teckcham. We take breakfast and dinner on the road. We breakfasted on the steps of a roadside temple erected for sacrifice to devils and the god of the earth. They are very

plentiful everywhere, and are usually about the size of a small fireplace at home, built of stone, plain or often ornamented. In them are little pots of the ashes of sandal wood, the remains of little sticks of that wood burned before the idol. A great crowd watched us intently whenever we ate, guessing at the dishes and asking their names. So was it at every meal. After breakfast we ascended to another plateau about 600 feet high, which we travelled over till two p. m. It was in some places rugged and sandy and in others stretched out like a prairie. At two p. m. we came to the edge and had one of the finest views we had yet seen, the valley in which lay the city of Teckcham. The valley stretched as far as the eye could reach cultivated to the highest degree and covered with villages, known by the clumps of trees among which they lay. You never see here the sign of even a large city till you are right upon it, the houses being low and hidden by the trees. We crossed several rivers in large scows after descending from the plateau. Before entering Teckcham we passed through another large *Hakka* city. After passing through this we came to the gate of the only walled city in North Formosa, Teckcham. Here was opened, only a couple of weeks before, our fifteenth station. The two principal cities in North Formosa are Teckcham and Bangkah, the former being the larger, and walled. It has been the principal prefectural city and the centre of the literati. They both boasted that we would never be able to have a chapel in them. Mr. McKay made several efforts before but did not push them very strongly any further than to feel the way to full establishment. A few weeks ago one of the helpers and his brother went to the city to try and secure a house by rent or sale. All property in the interior of China and out of Treaty Ports must be held by natives. Hence all the chapels are in the names of converts. These two above mentioned went to Teckcham and found a man who was willing to rent a store. They took a mortgage on the man's building, and when all the papers were made out properly they sent word to Mr. McKay. He and Mrs. McKay immediately went down to see about turning the store into a chapel. As soon as they (the people) knew the building was for a chapel there was a row among the baser sort. They banded together, several hundred of them, and threatened the workmen and the owner to do all kinds of things. Mr. and Mrs. McKay took up their quarters in the building, and resolved not to be driven out, and waited there during the eight or ten days of repairs till it was finished, when (having now a somewhat comfortable place to stay in instead of outside) they took possession of the chapel. All opposition soon died away and now instead of opposition, nine-tenths of the citizens are very favourable to our work. In fact it is very popular. Teckcham is a very fine city of 80,000 people. The wall is about sixteen feet high and twelve feet thick. As soon as we entered the city there was great excitement, heralds running ahead announcing our coming. Soon a great crowd collected which followed us to the chapel. In fact there was always a crowd at the chapel from daylight till long on in the night.

On Sunday morning the gong was sounded (the gong is the regular Chinese institution taking the place of our bell) and the people assembled for worship, the chapel being crammed. Mr. McKay and Ah Hoa, his first convert and the helper who is to be stationed at Teckcham, preached. After service intimation was made that all who were sick might wait and be helped; scores came that day. Some with diseases of the eye, some with horrible ulcers, some with toothache. In fact representatives of a large number of ills came. Many were instantly helped such as those with eye, skin and tooth troubles. Some were given medicines and some were told to go to the hospital at Tamsui. People were coming at all times for medicine. They would bring presents which of course were not accepted. The most honourable or honouring present in Teckcham was "*Betel nut*" fruit. This nut with the Chinese (especially in Teckcham) takes the place of "gum" at home. They chew it, but to a much greater extent than gum is used. The nut is wrapped up in a curious manner in the leaf of the tree, the leaf having been first smeared over with lime or rather mortar, either white or (more generally) coloured red. Men, women and children chew this to a disgusting extent. The trade in *Betel nut* is therefore very large. There is no doubt in my mind that the medical work done in the country by Mr. McKay is far more extensive than that done in the hospital in