

A HARD FIGHT.

A STORY FROM HONAN

For the CHILDREN'S RECORD:

LAST November a bright young man by the name of Liu, from a village about twenty miles away, came to the dispensary in Hsin Chên to be cured of the opium habit. He, together with several other men in his village, had heard the new doctrine and had resolved to become more familiar with its teachings.

Liu was soon convinced that the doctrine of Jesus Christ was exactly what he needed, and that if he accepted of Christ he would have to change his life and give up all his filthy habits. With this end in view he came to break off the chains which opium had fastened around him. Day by day while with me he read the Gospels and was a regular attendant at morning worship.

He was exhorted to pray earnestly to God for strength to overcome the terrible craving, and at the end of ten days he felt that he had conquered. Before leaving for his home he purchased a copy of the New Testament, and promised that come what would, he would follow Jesus and be His true disciple.

For two or three months encouraging reports came from him, and soon he became one of the leaders among a little band of Christians who met regularly to read the scriptures and to pray.

At first his parents and relatives were delighted to know that he had given up using opium, but when they realized that he was really studying the new doctrine and that he had already given up worshipping idols and burning incense they became greatly alarmed.

At first they reasoned with him, on all their persuasions were of no avail, for the young man was determined to become a Christian. Seeing that mild measures had no effect on the son, the parents at once said that the foreigners had bewitched him, and all the relatives and friends with one accord began to threaten him and to bitterly revile him for allowing himself to be corrupted.

For a while the poor fellow bore up bravely under all their persecutions and taunts. One day, however, the fight waxed hotter than usual and one of the party struck Liu on the mouth, and he could stand it no longer. He called for silence and then asked his parents if they would rather see him a slave to opium and other sins that he was formerly addicted to, or whether they would not rather see him a free man clean in heart and life, a man whom they could honor and respect and whose name might be handed down to posterity as one who desired to live a good life here, and inherit everlasting happiness beyond. With one accord they answered "Go back again to your old ways and habits rather than become a believer in this corrupt doctrine."

Their answer so exasperated the son that in a moment of weakness he called for his old enemy, the opium pipe, and without more ado began to smoke. Again and again he inhaled the subtle fumes until he was quite stupid. He came to his senses only to realize that the old appetite had returned and that his peace of mind was gone. He determined to fight the tempter down, but once, twice, thrice, and five times, the terrible craving conquered.

He then resolved to come back to Hsin Chên and make a full confession, which he did, and begged me to help him. We had a long talk and prayer together and I encouraged him not to trust in medicine, but to trust in God. He remained with us about a week and returned home once more with a light heart and a bright face, because he felt that once more he had gained the victory.

How long will he be able to fight against such odds? With God on his side he *will* win. Pray for him dear children for it is indeed a *hard fight*.

Yours sincerely,
J. FRAZER SMITH.

IF WRONG, OWN IT.—Never be ashamed to own you have been in the wrong; it is but saying in other words that you are wiser today than you were yesterday.