

RELIGIOUS DEPARTMENT

"Pectus Theologum Fecit."

F. MAYERS, Editor

OUR MISSIONARY—MR. EDICOTT'S LETTER.

Kia-ting, West China, January 12th, 1899.

The Boys, Wesley College.

Dear Fellow Students,—I have not heard from you since the College began, but I hope my letters to you have been received.

I presume that alarming reports regarding Sz-Chuan affairs have been common to the home papers of late. We have for months past been treated to an abundance of rumors and threats. More than once the day has been set for our destruction, but thus far in our neighborhood there has been nothing worse than ugly rumors. Affairs are now hastening to a climax and either peace is at hand or else a wide-spread and desolating rebellion. Most foreigners in the province, I think, are anticipating a victory for the forces representing law and order. In the meantime the people living in unwalled towns and the farming community are living in great terror. Vast numbers are moving into the walled cities for protection. Business, as a matter of course, is seriously affected. Our officials are busy preparing the city walls and in raising volunteers, and in some instances they are digging moats around their respective cities. After months of useless waiting and discussion they seem at length resolved to act—probably on account of strong pressure brought to bear on them from Peking. Large bodies of troops are being forwarded to the storm centre—nearly a hundred and fifty miles from Kia-ting—and we are daily expecting word of a serious engagement with the rebels.

The native Roman Catholics have suffered very severely. Many thousands have been made homeless and wander destitute, while it is said hundreds have been killed. Last week word came that one native had been actually crucified. The Protestant stations are in districts remote from the most disturbed neighborhood, and this explains their immunity thus far from serious harm.

You can readily understand that Mission work under such circumstances does not greatly flourish. The rebellion, coupled with affairs at Peking, has produced very grave uneasiness in the minds of the people, who, in the absence of definite information, imagine things to be even more serious than they are.

In the city our work goes on regularly. Books and magazines are sold in larger numbers than last year. Well-behaved crowds gather to hear the Gospel preached. We have been requested by the officials not to travel in the country, as they are held responsible for our safety. Yün Hsien is only a short distance