

NORTHERN MESSENGER

DEVOTED TO TEMPERANCE, SCIENCE, EDUCATION, AND LITERATURE.

VOLUME XXVIII, No. 23.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 10, 1893.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

MISS ANNIE R. TAYLOR, CHINESE MISSIONARY AND TRAVELLER IN TIBET.

The heroism of faith finds fresh illustration in the remarkable journey accomplished by Miss Taylor into the jealously-secluded regions of Tibet proper. Going in faith, believing that the Lord had sent her, she traversed thousands of miles where no European foot had ever trodden before. We are aware that certain travellers have crossed Tibet in various directions, but few indeed have penetrated Inner Tibet; and of those known to have reached Lhasa, only two have returned to tell the tale. Apart, however, from any question of priority, the journey just completed is of peculiar interest in that it was definitely undertaken by faith, and in order to open the way for the Gospel.

Miss A. R. Taylor was early led to the knowledge of Jesus. Her thoughts were first directed to the heathen when, a school girl at Richmond, Dr. Moffat's son gave an address on Africa, which greatly impressed at least one of his young hearers. The place and power of women in missions, had not then been discovered, and the whole drift of the speaker's appeal was for young men. His plea was, however, so forceful that the sympathetic young pupil almost wished she were a boy that she might go at once. From that time she read all the missionary literature she could obtain, and pondered the theme constantly. Some years later she found that the Lord wanted women for China, that they were being accepted and sent out by the China Inland Mission, and that their labors were being blessed in the Flowery Land. When very young she read in 'Near Home and Far Off' accounts of that strange mysterious region so rigidly closed against Europeans, and in this way Tibet seems to have laid hold of her mind.

In due course Miss Taylor offered herself to and was accepted by the China Inland Mission. In 1884 she went out to China, and having learned the language, worked for a time in Tau-chau, near the Tibetan frontier. She was the first English person to reside in this city, and in 1887 visited the Great Lama monastery of Kum-bum, where the French priests, MM. Gabet and Huc, had previously learned Tibetan. Beyond this point no English traveller had gone, though a few Russians had explored the districts. That great unevangelized land pressed upon Miss Taylor's heart. When our Lord bade his witnesses 'go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature' He knew all about Tibetan exclusiveness. 'We have,' she reflected, 'received no orders from the Lord that are impossible to be carried out.' In the story of the China Inland Mission, she saw how the great interior of China had seemed hermetically closed until the foot of faith pressed forward, and then strangely and wonderfully it opened before the Lord's servants as they went in to possess: so she

believed it would be on 'the roof of the world,' as Tibet has frequently been termed by reason of its altitude. At length she resolved to make the attempt to penetrate Central Asia, and reach, if possible, Lhasa, the sacred city of the Lamas, and the capital of Tibet. This city lies nearer our Indian frontier than China.

Leaving China in 1888, Miss Taylor came home via Australia and India, and went on to Darjeeling, on the Bengal frontier, going to a Tibetan village near Darjeeling, her object being to learn the language. From there she pressed forward into Sikkim (not then under English rule). 'I went,' she says, 'in simple faith,

Some conversation between the women as she was eating aroused Miss Taylor's suspicion as to the eggs placed before her, and sure enough, after she had partaken she became ill, with all the symptoms of aconite poisoning. The Tibetan chief was greatly alarmed at her living so near the border, and came over and ordered her back to Darjeeling. She refused to go there, but settled down in a hut near a Tibetan monastery called Podang Gumpa, living as best she could.

After a year spent in Sikkim, during ten months of which she never saw a European, being surrounded by natives only, Miss Taylor was led to see that it was the Lord's

Tauchau, a city in Kansuh on the borders of Tibet, and surrounded by Tibetan villages. She visited several large monasteries and became familiar with many phases of Tibetan life and character. In the monasteries she found some intelligent lamas, free from the grosser superstitions, and willing to lend her what assistance she required.

A year was thus spent on the frontier, and at last came the longed-for opportunity of penetrating the interior. It came about thus. A Chinese Mohammedan, Noga, had a wife from Lhasa, and he had promised her mother that he would return to Lhasa with his wife in three years. This he wished to do, but, having no money, he consented to conduct Miss Taylor to the capital, provided she found the necessary horses and funds. Mrs. Noga had already become very friendly with the young English lady, because she could speak her language, which the natives on the Chinese side could not do. Thus the way was prepared, and on September 2, 1892, Miss Taylor and her four servants, two Chinese and two Tibetans, started from Tau-chau for the interior.

The country is one mass of lofty mountains, a large part of it is above the snow line; the roads are merely mountain tracks, while the people seem to live almost wholly by brigandage, preying incessantly on the caravans which traverse the country. Hence the account of the long and arduous journey is simply a narrative of sore hardship amid snow and ice, perils from lawless robbers, and yet graver perils from her faithless and false guide, for Noga proved to be a great rascal, whose only object in taking Miss Taylor into Tibet appeared to be to rob and murder her; in the first he succeeded pretty thoroughly, but in the second he failed, inasmuch as she had 'a shield of defence' of which he dreamt not, and she was kept with a sure hand.

Four days after leaving Tau-chau the little party encountered eight brigands, who were fortunately having tea, and took some time to light up the tinder-boxes of their match-locks. Miss Taylor's party had only five fighting-men, but these, led by a young priest or lama, who was intensely fond of fighting, skilfully kept off the enemy until, after much firing, but no bloodshed, they had to retreat. Three days after, a friendly caravan of Mongols was joined, which much increased the strength of the party. Soon after the entire caravan was surrounded by 200 brigands, firing on all hands. Resistance was useless, and most of the men slipped away, leaving the property to the enemy. Two men were killed and eight wounded, and seven horses and some yaks wounded. At last the lama packed off the two women and Miss Taylor's faithful Tibetan servant, Pontso, calling out to the enemy that they were women. They were allowed to ride away, as it is against the Tibetan custom to fire at a woman. It appeared that this at-



MISS TAYLOR AND NATIVE SERVANT.

believing that the Lord had called me. I knew that the difficulties were great, and that enemies would be numerous, but I trusted God to take care of me, just as He protected David from the hands of Saul.' She got not far from Kambajong, a Tibetan fort. Here the natives would ask her frequently what they were to do with her body if she died. She told them she was not going to die just then. They have, however, a custom of 'praying people dead,' and to this they resorted, taking care to help their prayers in a very effective manner. One day the chief's wife invited the stranger to eat, and prepared rice and a mixture of eggs for her.

will she should enter Tibet by way of China. Her stay at Sikkim had, however, not been in vain. First, she had learned the language as spoken at Lhasa, and secondly she had secured a faithful Tibetan servant. This young man, Pontso, is a native of Lhasa. Travelling on the frontier of India he had hurt his feet and was directed to the white stranger for treatment. He had never seen a foreigner before, and the kindness shown him won his heart, so that from that time he has been her constant companion and devoted servant, as well as a follower of Jesus.

Taking him with her, Miss Taylor sailed for Shanghai, went up the great river to