

replied: "There is no use in numbering my years, they have been many and full of sorrow. I am ripened fruit ready to drop. Her husband had died young, leaving a little son who grew up to twenty-two and died. 'I cared for my son as one cares for a tender plant,' she said, 'but they hated me in hell so they deprived me of all! Last week I went to the city god and besought him, "When may I die? I am not desirous of remaining longer in this life." But his answer was, "You repine too much."'"

When one wishes to consult an idol, he goes to the temple, prostrates himself before the altar, takes a box containing about one hundred slips of bamboo, each marked with a number, shakes the box up and down, and the slip which falls out is the one chosen by the idol. This numbered bamboo stick is then taken to the keeper of the temple, who, by referring to the same number in the Book of Answers, is able to report the reply of the idol.

After I had visited the old woman many times, she asked one day, "Shall we ever meet in the after life?" She said the thought of the terrible bridge only three inches wide and eighty-four feet long which she must cross in the dark filled her with dread. If one has done any kind of wrong, it is impossible to cross, and if one falls there are serpents, evil spirits and dogs ready to tear one in pieces. I have tried to teach her that she need not have that fear haunting her life, but as often as her face lighted up with hope, the power of her old beliefs returned. "What would my spirit do for food if no one made offerings for me?" she would ask, "and how can I worship your God when I cannot see Him?" When taking leave of her, I have often remembered, "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone."

Contrast the devotion of this old woman to her idols, and the devotion of Bih Tao Ma to God.

She, too, is a poor widow of sixty. She came to us as a patient five or six years ago. Her lips were almost bloodless, her face and hands bloated and her skin a saffron yellow. The Chinese consider such a one as being 'done' by the devils and leave her severely alone. At the hospital she heard the message of Jesus and believed from that hour.

Bih Tao Ma supports herself by carrying and sifting lime and charcoal and by renting out her three buffalo cows for plowing. She also has a little strip of land where she raises rice and melons. The buffaloes are at once her comfort and distress. The best one will plow for a time, then start for home in spite of all that can be done. Another has a habit of running away, and the old woman spends days sometimes in searching for it, and then must pay a fee to whoever harbored it. Last Sunday it disappeared again, and the calf was sick, so the poor woman was very sad, but she said, "I will never cease to love Jesus, even if they all die."

She is a *dorcas* in her village. Several times she has brought distressed people to the hospital, and the great desire of her heart is to see her friends and neighbors led to Christ. She told one woman who owed her several dollars that, if she would give up her idols and believe in Christ, the debt would be forgiven. To another who said, "What would I have to eat if I kept Sunday?" she answered, "Come and eat with me on Sundays."

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### You Can Never Tell.

You can never tell when you send a word  
Like an arrow shot from a bow,  
By an archer blind, be it cruel or kind,  
Just where it will chance to go.  
It may pierce the breast of your dearest friend,  
Tipped with its poison or balm;  
To a stranger's heart in life's great mart  
It may carry its pain or its calm.

You can never tell when you do an act,  
Just what the result will be,  
But with every deed you are sowing a seed,  
Though its harvest you may not see.  
Each kindly act is an acorn dropped  
In God's productive soil;  
Though you may not know, yet the tree shall grow  
And shelter the brows that toil.

You can never tell what your thoughts will do

In bringing you hate or love,  
For thoughts are things, and their airy wings  
Are swifter than carrier doves.  
They follow the law of the universe;  
Each thing must create its kind,  
And they speed o'er track to bring you back  
Whatever went out from your mind.

—'Waif.'

### True to His Faith.

(Ida T. Thurston, in 'Young People's Weekly'.)

A missionary who was in Peking during the memorable siege tells of a little lad of twelve who, amid the horrors of the Boxer uprising, proved himself of the true martyr spirit.

When the mission schools were closed and the pupils sent away, the father of this boy took him and his little sister to the house of a Chinaman who was his cousin, and begged that the children might stay there for a while. "Just until I can go to the missionaries and see if they will take the children in—they'll be safer there than at home," he pleaded.

At first the cousin absolutely refused. "No, no!" he protested, "I can't do it. The Boxers may be here any time, and they'll ask the boy if he is a Christian. He'll say 'Yes'—you know he will—and then they'll kill him and the girl; but they won't stop there. They'll kill me and my children, too, because I've sheltered Christians."

However, the father's prayers and pleadings finally prevailed, and the man reluctantly agreed to keep the children a little while.

"But you must hurry!" he urged. "I can't keep them long, anyhow."

Thankful for even so much the anxious father hastened away; but no sooner was he gone than the Chinaman said sternly to the boy: "Now, see here, when the Boxers come and ask you if you are a Christian you've got to say 'No.' Do you understand?"

The poor little fellow was shaking with terror, but he looked up into the stern face above him and answered steadily: "I can't do that. I am a Christian, and a Christian may not lie."

"But you must, boy; you must say 'No.' If you don't, you'll be killed—you and your sister both; and I and my children will be killed, too, just because of you. You must say 'No' to save all our lives. Tell me that you will say 'No!'" the man cried.

Tears were rolling down the boy's pale cheeks, and he caught his little sister's hand, held it fast, but he did not waver.

"I can't. A Christian cannot lie," he sobbed out.

For a moment the man stood, his face dark

with mingled fear and anger as he stared at the dauntless little figure before him. He saw that the boy would not yield, and he tried another way.

"Well, then, this you can do," he said, "holding up a stick of incense and holding it out to the boy. 'When the Boxers come you need not speak at all; but just light this and hold it up before the Joss yonder,' pointing to the idol in the corner. 'Think!' His voice rose sharp and shrill. 'If you don't we must die. We must all die just for you.'"

The boy's lips quivered and his fingers tightened on the tiny hand he held, as he heard his sister's frightened sobbing at his side; but once again he answered, his voice low and broken: "It would be worshipping an idol—that I cannot do."

Then the man flung open the door, tore the boy roughly from his sister's clinging grasp, and thrust him out into the night.

"Go, then, go!" he shouted. "You shall not stay here to bring death upon us all."

The door slammed behind him and the little Christian stood alone in the darkness, at the mercy of the dreaded Boxers, who, he knew too well, were hunting and shouting their savage war-cry: "Kill; kill! kill!"

The little fellow crouched on the doorstep, afraid to go elsewhere. "Oh, if father would only come!" he sobbed, his ears strained in deadly terror of the coming savage hordes.

But the man that closed the door was not heartless. Presently he opened it a crack and peered out. Seeing the little trembling figure on the step he whispered hoarsely, "Will you say 'No'?"

Silently the boy shook his head, and again the door was shut and once more he was alone in the night shadows. Half an hour, an eternity it seemed to him—had passed, when again the door was opened and the old question flung at him: "Will you promise now?"

"Oh, I can't; I can't!" wailed the boy. It seemed as if his heart would break; almost he felt as if his Lord had forsaken him when for the third time the door was shut. But all the while his Lord was working for him; working by his Spirit on the heart of the man who knew Him not.

Yet once again the door was opened, and for a moment the man stood looking in sheer wonder at the forlorn little figure huddled at his feet. Then suddenly he stooped and caught the boy's arm.

"Come in, then; come in," he said. "After all, you are my cousin's son, and I must save you if I can."

He drew the boy within, and—may it not be that God's angel kept watch and ward over the house that sheltered his loyal little disciple? At any rate, before the Boxers came the children's father returned and carried them to the Compound, where the missionaries had promised to receive them.

Only a little lad of twelve, but one of God's heroes, the stuff of which martyrs are made.

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