

to form a complete history of the missionary labors of "American Presbyterians" in Canada—labors commenced and long continued before assistance of any kind could be obtained from the "Mother Church" in Great Britain.

Correspondence on the subject, and relating to any department of Canadian Presbyterian history is solicited.

### FAMINE IN CHINA.—A TERRIBLE RECORD.

MR. EDITOR.—Crossing the Pacific on my way to China in the end of 1874, I made the acquaintance of a Chinaman of the name of Suvoong. He had been brought to America fifteen years before by a missionary to be educated. He had taken a full course in Arts and Theology at Kenyon College, Ohio, and in Medicine at Bellevue Hospital, New York, and was an accomplished and interesting Christian gentleman. He is at present in the service of the Chinese Government at Shanghai, but employs his spare hours in Christian work. By last mail from China I received a letter, the following extracts from which I hope you will be able to publish in full.

Surely we in Canada in the enjoyment of plenty and the prospect of a bountiful harvest, are able to, and should do something to relieve such dire distress. Christians here have now an opportunity of demonstrating to the heathen Chinese the *real spirit* of Christianity. "Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Let us examine ourselves in this matter! Let us not lag behind other Christian nations! Will not some of our well-known benevolent men in our large cities begin the work of raising a *Chinese Famine Fund*? If rightly begun it will be heartily carried on through the whole country. Yours very sincerely, J. B. FRASER, *Missionary of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.*

Toronto, May 23rd, 1878.

MY DEAR FRIEND,..... In regard to the famine I can only say that it is the most appalling that I have heard or read of in either ancient or modern history. It fairly stupefies one's senses to think of it. There is no word to exaggerate its extent and severity. I will endeavor to find some papers for you which contain detailed accounts of it from time to time. I will, however, add a word from my own personal knowledge of the case.

The country ever since the Tai-ping Rebellion has never recovered its old prosperity. Many millions of people had been killed, and the land had been literally desolated and turned into a wilderness in a great many parts of the country. Trees had been cut down or burnt, and the consequence was the land became arid and retained no moisture, and thereby one great source of rain was cut off. This was the first and great cause of the great calamity now upon us. The second cause is in what remaining good land there is in those parts being devoted to the *opium* culture, either in part or wholly. The people had been impoverished from one cause and another, but miserable as they were they still wanted opium, and as the imported article is expensive they tried to raise it on their own soil, and hence the second cause of the famine.

The Government has, indeed, issued edicts and proclamations, from time to time, against the opium culture, but the poverty of the people to pay for the foreign article, made them of nene effect. And by far the largest number of the people who smoked opium, first succumbed to the debilitating effects of reduced ration and actual hunger. Some roads in the interior are white with the bones of the famished, the atmosphere is laden with odors of putrefaction, and those still alive faintly cry for anything that may sustain life. The people are so faint that they have not the strength to bury those who have gone before them on the way in which they are going very fast themselves.

The cereal grains had been exhausted long time ago, leaves and bark, grass and roots, of any sort that nature sparingly dealt out to them were eagerly seized upon and devoured; even moss and lichens have been scraped together to furnish a meal to these poor wretches. Houses have been torn down to search for anything green that might under any pretext be eaten, and the old timbers carried away to be sold for a trifle. Others would lean against the wall and cast wistful glances at the beams and rafters which they had not

the strength to rear down and carry away to be thus sold.

Parents at first could not bear to see their children suffer hunger, so had some of them sold to traders, to be taken to more fortunate lands; then such traders got scarce, or the supply became too great—then they buried their own children alive. But there have been others more horrible still, if anything, that *actually* ate their own offspring! Yes (but O God! how can such a calamity be permitted in this nineteenth century!), the people are actually bartering in human flesh to satisfy the dire hunger! Once a man agreed with his neighbor to buy his wife for the sum of two taels (nearly \$3.20), for the stipulated purpose of killing her and eating her. No. 2 took the money and promised to bring the victim over directly, but on a second thought he won't do it, so No. 1 went over to see why the victim was not forthcoming, and behold! he found part of the victim was already in the boiler! He expostulated with No. 2 for his bad faith, but No. 2 replied that he might take his money back, "for," said he, "I thought over the matter, and came to the conclusion that money is of no use now; I'd rather kill my wife and eat her myself."

The description of Josephus, in regard to the capture of Jerusalem, was nothing to what we sometimes hear from the interior, and when we remember that nearly half the Empire of China is under the scourge, we may well be sure that if no aid can be obtained outside of China, millions upon millions will be hurried to an untimely grave. It is true that the Government has done and is doing its utmost, curtailing its own expenses, remitting taxes, and drawing very large sums for the relief of the people, but, alas! all these are insufficient. The more favored Chinese everywhere at home and abroad have done and are doing their utmost; the generous among the foreign residents, Christian nations of England and United States, yes, all have done a share, but the cry is all the time, "MORE FOOD, MORE FOOD!"

I believe *all the money received from foreigners is distributed by the missionaries to the famished people*, and thereby a good impression is made on the minds of the people in regard to the missionaries, who are thus enabled to preach, not an EMPTY RELIGION, but one that has a compassion on the body also. If Christians wish to give the Bread of Life to the heathen, let the famishing millions first have a taste of the bread that perisheth, and then they will live long enough to hear about the Bread that perisheth not.

If you can collect any amount you may send it to the Rev. Wm. Muirhead, of the London Mission, in Shanghai, who is the Secretary of the Famine Relief Fund Committee, or to any other receiving centres that are likely being formed now in America for the purpose..... I am, yours truly, V. P. SUVOONG.

Kiangnan Arsenal, Shanghai, April 8th, 1878.

P.S.—Editors of newspapers in cities, towns, or country, throughout the Province, desirous to do something for the relief of these starving people, will please copy.

J. B. F.

### THE GRANT TO METIS.

MR. EDITOR,—Dr. Cochrane in the outset seeks to leave the impression that my letters have compelled him to divulge what otherwise he would have gladly concealed. To this I reply by saying that I have not written one word except in self-defence, and that the "unfair" insinuations and "unmanly" threats contained in his previous letters must have compelled any man with a shred of self-respect to make the demand I did. And when he now asserts that I am responsible for his present attitude, it suggests to me the first really painful thoughts in connection with the matter. And I further beg to state that in this, his third communication, the Doctor has made no fresh revelation whatever. He had nothing more to tell. His previous letters contained in a condensed form all that he has now unfolded and must have suggested to every suspicious mind a great deal more.

Do I then accept his last communication as a proper presentation of the case? Not by any means. And it will be for the Doctor himself to judge what bearing the statement I now submit may have on the closing paragraph of his last reply, and to govern himself accordingly. I cannot refrain from correcting a misrepresentation in case Dr. Cochrane should choose to consider that I am impugning his veracity. I never dreamed of doing the latter, whereas I have had occasion to do the former, and feel constrained to do so again.

The Doctor says, "When the case came up, Mr. Wright stated that he hardly knew what to say about this Station; that the Presbytery had been endeavouring for some time past to effect a change, . . . and that possibly the best thing its committee could do, was to withhold the grant for a time, in the hope that such action on the part of the Committee would bring about the change that seemed to the Presbytery so desirable." Now, "when the case came up" and the first resolution to take the grant from Metis was carried in the Committee, I was five hundred miles from the scene of its deliberations. I was not at that meeting at all, and never had been at any former one. The usual application for the *yearly* grant to Metis was sent in writing, on the blank form prepared by the Committee, and unaccompanied by any remark; and I knew nothing of the results of that application until I read in the printed minutes of meeting the following words, "Metis—asked \$170 per annum. Granted for next *six months*. The Presbytery hereby notified that unless the contributions of the people are increased, the grant will then be withdrawn." It was at the expiration of these six months and when the resolution was to come into force that I found myself for the first time at a meeting of the Home Mission Committee. Then, "when the case came up," I stated that I had no message from the Presbytery regarding Metis, and that the conditions the committee had demanded for the continuance of the grant were not realized. *I acquiesced in the previous decision of the Committee*, and had the strongest possible reasons for believing that the Presbytery did the same; and I expressed the hope that the course taken would bring about some such change in Metis as the Presbytery by its method had failed to effect. If in this I did injustice to the Presbytery of Quebec, I shall feel obliged to any member of that court to state over his own signature in what respect I did so, as this will give me the opportunity I desire of discussing the subject from that side. The only resolution that I ever either moved or seconded in Quebec Presbytery affecting Metis, was one begging the Home Mission Committee to add \$50 to Mr. Fenwick's grant.

It will be observed then, that I never occupied a seat in the Committee until six months after the resolution deciding the fate of Metis was passed; and in all seriousness I would ask the Doctor how he can *persist* in holding me responsible for that resolution. *Why* does he repeat it, without careful enquiry after I gave it a simple denial in my first reply? I can easily understand how the Doctor in the hurry of his manifold labours might inadvertently do a brother an injustice; but after time to reflect and leisure to inquire, yea, after being fanned for two weeks by the balmy breezes of the south, and living in a very atmosphere of brotherly love, how is it that on his return home he returns also to an "unfair" attack on me. I do not complain of the tone of Dr. Cochrane's letter. Its tone is quite Christian and kind; but these qualities only make it the more plausible in itself and the more dangerous to me. He is offended when I call it a "mistake," and I am anxious *not* to offend. I therefore ask himself to suggest the more euphonious word, by which he desires his action henceforth to be described. A speaker at last Assembly eulogizing the Doctor's energy and force of character, called him a "steam engine in trowsers." There is great significance in that beautiful metaphor; and I only wish the Doctor would justify the application then made of it, by showing that he, too, is built with *reversible* power, and that he can "back up" as gracefully as he can advance vigorously.

But it seems that after all the Doctor has told there is a "back-ground of mystery" still. "Should Mr. Wright challenge my statement then other members of the committee are prepared not only to substantiate it, but to add to it certain other remarks made by the Presbytery's representative on the floor of the Committee." I know not whether these members will consider the Doctor's statement "challenged" by what I have now written or not; but, in any case, my sincere desire is that they should furnish whatever information they possess to put the matter in a proper light. Now that the confidential nature of the Committee's proceedings has been violated in a way that seems to me so gratuitous and inexcusable, I suppose that any one may enter by the open door, and that no one will blame me for taking such liberty as self-defence requires. Regarding Mr. Fenwick I may say now, what in substance I said in Committee; that the Presbytery regarded him as an exceedingly concien-