

Jubilee of the China Inland Mission

THE WONDERFUL STORY OF A GREAT WORK OF FAITH
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[Many of our readers will be glad to know something of one of the most marvellous Missions of modern days. An Anglican clergyman, Rev. J. Stuart Holden, Rector of St. Paul's, Portman Square, London, is now the Home Director. Rev. H. W. Frost, formerly of Toronto, is the Director for North America. Dr. O'Meara and other Churchmen are on the Council of the Mission.]

WHO can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all His praise?" (Psalm 106:2.) These words of the Psalmist may well be called to remembrance in connection with the jubilee of the China Inland Mission, which takes place this year.

The past fifty years have witnessed greater changes than any similar period in the world's history, and at present still more momentous occurrences seem to be impending. In the sphere of Evangelism the China Inland Mission has been one of the instruments that God has raised up for the carrying on of His purposes in the world.

In order to find the origin from which the work of the Mission sprang, we must go to Barnsley, Yorkshire, in the year 1849. Hudson Taylor, then a lad of seventeen, has just yielded his life to God in an act of whole-hearted consecration, and the answer comes to his heart with convincing power, as though God had said to him, "Then go for Me to China."

It was not until the year 1865 that the final step was taken which led to the formation of the Mission. Mr. Taylor had gone to China in 1853, and after working there for seven years he had returned to England in 1860 with health impaired. His heart being burdened by the needs of China, he continued to work and pray for that land during the six years in which he was detained at home. Before the close of 1865 he had been instrumental in sending out five men, all of whom were designated for the carrying on of work which had already been commenced in the coast province of Chekiang. The great unreach interior of China was, however, coming more and more into view, and the conviction that something ought to be done for its perishing millions was pressing upon his heart. He knew the difficulties, almost amounting to impossibilities, that lay before him; others who were urged to undertake this work could not see their way to enter upon so overwhelming a task, but the compulsion of God was upon His servant, and so the response of the obedient heart was not merely, "I will," but rather, "I must."

When the great Apostle of the Gentiles wrote "Necessity is laid upon me," he was probably no more under Divine compulsion than was God's servant Hudson Taylor in the summer of 1865. Accordingly, we find him at Brighton on June 25, praying for "twenty-four willing, skilful labourers" to go forth with him to China. Having presented his petition, he realized that the burden of responsibility had passed into God's hands, and with a free and rejoicing heart he set himself to the fulfilment of the ministry which God had laid upon him. Referring to this in his latest book, Dr. J. R. Mott has written as follows:—"Of what value would Hudson Taylor's vision of inland China have been had he not devoted himself from the time he received it until his death to doing all in his power to realize his vision?"

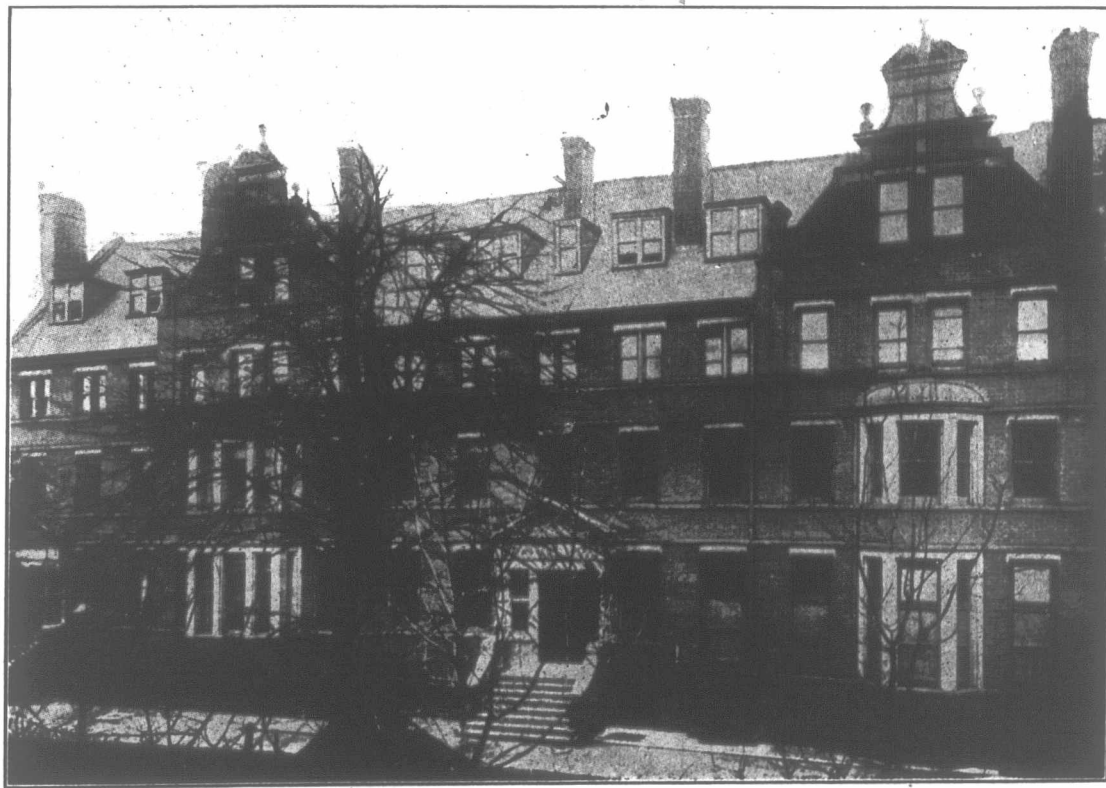
It was September, 1866, when he arrived in Shanghai, accompanied by his band of pioneer missionaries, and he immediately sought to se-

cure a centre where they might engage in the study of the language, and from which the work could spread out in the future. This was found in the large city of Hangchow, and it was from



The Rev. J. Hudson Taylor, Founder of the China Inland Mission.

(Photo taken in America in 1900).



The China Inland Mission House, London, England.

here that the new workers began to reach out to the regions beyond, until by the efforts of themselves and others the remotest provinces of the Empire were reached.

In the following years many difficulties had to be faced. The people were, for the most part, stolidly indifferent to the message of the Gospel, but they were decidedly opposed to the presence of the foreigners, and in several cases serious riots occurred. The hardships encountered were made light of and soon forgotten by those whose hearts were filled with a deep desire for the com-

ing of the Redeemer's Kingdom and an intense love for the people whom they were seeking to serve.

Gradually visits were made to some of the nearer provinces, and openings were found for the extension of the work, and by the close of the first decade the new Mission had established itself in the provinces of Kiangsu, Anhwei, Kiangsi, and Hupeh, in addition to having enlarged its operations in the first occupied province of Chekiang.

The station opened in the province of Hupeh was in the city of Wuchang, opposite Hankow, on the Yangtze, a strategic point in the very centre of China, whence the whole of the West could be reached.

It was in the year 1876 that the famous Chefoo Convention was signed by Sir Thomas Wade and Li Hung-chang, and it recognized for the first time the right of foreigners to travel in the interior and the obligation of the Chinese Government to afford them protection. Simultaneously, in the providence of God, a fresh band of missionaries was prepared with a view to pressing on into the great beyond, and from Wuchang long journeys were made to the north, the west, and the south, into regions still wholly unoccupied. Concerning this new effort, Mr. Taylor wrote, "If our men succeed in locating themselves, they will surely be followed by more and abler workers, and our hearts will rejoice in the more widespread diffusion of the blessed Gospel of the grace of God. May the Lord hasten it!"

These anticipations were realized. Following upon the preliminary journeys, settled work was opened up in far-distant parts of the vast interior, until every province in China was occupied and the missionaries of many other societies took part with us in the forward movement. The enlarging sphere of operations necessitated an increase in the staff of missionaries, and during the latter half of the mission's second decade very considerable reinforcements were received. In the year 1881, after making a careful survey of the whole field of the Mission's operations, prayer was offered in China for the sending out of seventy new workers during the three following years, and by the end of 1884, rather more than the number asked for had reached the field.

The following year saw the departure of the famous "Cambridge Seven," headed by Stanley Smith and C. T. Studd, and including D. E. Hoste, now the general director of the Mission, and W. W. Cassels, now Bishop of Western China. The year 1887 will always be memorable from the fact that during its course no fewer than a hundred men and women were accepted in London and sent out to China. This was the result of a deliberate and careful plan, begotten in much prayer, and carried out through the strenuous exertions of the members of the Mission, both in England and China. These large reinforcements not only helped materially to further the direct evangelization of China, but their going forth also served as an example to stimulate the faith and effort of God's servants in other societies.

HALF-A-CENTURY'S PROGRESS.

At the close of the year 1887 the membership of the Mission amounted to 294, and in the intervening years the numbers have steadily increased, until in this jubilee

year there are 1,063 members and associates. These have come from all parts of the United Kingdom, and also from the United States and the British Dominions, as well as from all the Protestant countries in Europe.

The opening-up of the country was by no means the greatest difficulty that had to be faced in the early years of the work, the greatest difficulty lay in the attitude of the people themselves. In addition to all the darkness of mind that results from centuries of human life without the knowledge of God, there was in China a strong anti-