"THE CITY OF DREADFUL NIGHT"

Pitiful Narratives of Suffering of Famine-Stricken Chinese in Anhui District—Hundreds Dying

From Puchou in Anhui, where hundreds of thousands are starving and dying, and missionaries and others are distributing relief while thousands fight for pittances to keep them alive for a day, come harrowing details of the Chinese famine conditions. A sketch written by Mrs. J. B. Cochran, wife of a medical missionary engaged there, which she calls "The City of Dreadful Night," as follows:

"The Temple of the City God, right under our windows, a stone's throw from our verandah, raises its rugged walls and picturesque, curved roofs with as staunch a face to the world as it has shown for all these long centuries past; and the old City God himself sits stolidly on his throne and smiles calmly and benignly down, untouched though his people, hundreds of them, are starving and dying before his face, and his temple has become indeed "The City of Dreadful Night."

They are huddled there in that old temple, homeless and starving—professional beggars with their masses of letters, and conventional cracked bowl and staff; people from the city whose homes have been chopped up and sold for kindling wood, to buy bread; decent country people with their little wailing children, who have wandered in, in a forlorn hope, rather than sit quietly and starve at home; parents who have seen their children one after the other starve and die, children left behind when the parents, having given them their last bite, staggered and fell, —they are all there and the old idol smiles benignly down on all these his children.

Abandon Hope.

"A few nights ago a family—there were five left—gave up hope and in one corner of this 'City of Dreadful Night,' the father first strangled his three children and then he and the mother hung themselves. A strange sight this for the City God to smile upon when the sun struggled in and showed it the next morning.

"Two days go, kind Mr. Liu, going about with bread, said to Mr. Chen, "We will wait till about ten o'clock in the morning, then all who are able will have crawled out to beg." At ten o'clock when they entered the temple, they found twenty-eight men, women and little children too weak to move, lying prostrate perforce, before the placid face of their god. The two Christians sick with pity gave them food; but when they again came next morning, six, too far gone to take the food even when it came, had died.

"Each morning, long before daylight these two good men take out what money we can all give (for we ourselves being foreigners and marked men dare not give a cent for fear of mobs) and distribute it in coin and food to those who are, as Mr. Liu says, 'about to die.' As these two Christians enter the temple, the gaunt wretched figures rise up from all the shadows and snatch like crazy things for the food they are trying to give out. Once Mr. Liu held out a bit of beancake to a man who stood swaying as he waited, but the crowd cried out 'Too late,' as the man, his hand still outstretched, staggered and fell dead.

Nightly Death Toll.

"They die there,' said Mr. Liu, 'almost every night. Some times one or two, sometimes, if the night has been bitter cold, many more, frozen or starved to death.'

"Oh, God pity them. These dwellers in 'The City of Dreadful Night.' For hundreds, yes, hundreds of thousands, of them are starving and dying before their idol's benign smiling face and placidly folded hands."

Rev. W. Bostock writes to the relief committee at Shanghai as follows: "Some time ago I thought I was telling you a pitiful story when I told you of people living on wheat bran. But as the days go by and as I know more of the needs, the story becomes far more pitiful. Some homes are to be seen cooking nothing but the leaves of trees, such as we would use for putting in a horse stable for his bed. But the worst that I have heard of has been the cooking of simply dry wheat chaff. Now, how that can be considered as human food I do not know and do not attempt to explain to you, but that is what is done. It only means that many of these poor sufferers are at their very last extreme. It is beyond me to give you any description of what is all around us. Human beings barefooted and all but naked on freezing cold days, and children on the streets most pitifully crying out 'I am hungry, I am hungry, I am hungry,' is what one must see and hear and then, whatever his feelings are for them, he must turn a deaf ear to their pitiful pleadings, for as yet the amount that is within reach of us who are trying to render assistance is but as the drop in the bucket. One poor woman was almost starved and having nothing for her child threw it away and then started to the place where food was being given out, hoping to receive something to keep life for her aged mother. She was one of the multitudes who got nothing and when she returned to her home at night it was to learn that her mother had hung herself to get rid of the knawing hunger."

HERE AND THERE

Many people must have wondered, when reading magazines and newspaper articles describing the discoveries of scientists in the realm of bacteriology in recent years, how it is possible that there are so many old people in the world who never heard of microbes in their young days and who in later years took no precautions against their attacks.

We have so many stories of microbes and of the deadliness of their attacks that there are women, and men too, not a few, who live in constant terror of their lives. The women scour and wash till they are worn out. They watch for symptoms of disease in themselves or in members of their families with a vigilance that keeps them in a constant fever of anxiety. They are afraid to eat or drink lest some of the dangerous germs shall be taken into their systems. All this contributes to a constant state of ill-health and the people who are ready to give advice to everyone they meet are, too often, themselves, unhappy invalids. The men act much in the same way, except that they do not as a rule, wear themselves out with hard work. Instead, they often make the lives of their women folks a burden by their interference with household arrangements. All this over anxiety, is very bad for the individual, though its effect on careless people may be good in the main.

It is, however, a relief to know that there is a great deal of wisdom in the course pursued by those who go about their daily business as if there were no such things as microbes in the world.

Dr. Alvah Doty, health officer of the Port of New York, says that the influence of the omnipresent microbe as an agent for the destruction of health and life has been absurdly exaggerated, and that if people would think less and worry less upon this subject it would be a great deal better for them. He believes that the accounts of discoveries of medical men and their descriptions of the effects of the germs of various diseases have been misunderstood by the general reader.

These articles are written from the standpoint of the medical man who has an understanding of the constitution of the human body, which the ordinary reader does not possess. It is this which gives them the character of that "little knowledge which is a dangerous thing." They tell only one side of the truth.

The lesson Dr. Dotty would teach is not that rational precautions for the general welfare should not be observed, but that selfish solicitude about one's own health invites the very dangers the individual tries to avoid. It is a lesson too much needed in our time. While there are thousands who are ready to risk their lives for the good of others in the laboratories, the hospitals and the slums of cities, there are in too many homes sisters and daughters who lack the bravery and self forgetfulness which would help them to save those who should be dear to them, or if this is impossible, to render their last days happy.

We have heard something lately of the refusal of teachers in our own province to perform work which they considered the duty of others. The truant officer, the medical health officer or other officials who have more or less connection with the schools are called upon to do work which in the old days, old-fashioned teachers would not have hesitated to undertake. This is, perhaps, in accordance with the modern idea of the sub-division of labor. But, it is to be feared that in many instances there is not that strong personal interest in each pupil which from the earliest times marked the real teacher.

It is interesting to learn that among some English teachers there is a tendency in the opposite direction. A plan has been formed in Liverpool whereby children on leaving school shall be placed in positions for which their natural gifts fit them. These children are watched over by the education committee during the years when their habits are being formed and their future occupation learned. "In the bureau scheme," we are told by the Technical Magazine, the schoolmasters, who in conjunction with the education committee, have to do with the boys and girls until they are at least fourteen years of age, continue what may be called a post-graduate interest, finding them positions and watching out for their welfare. Careful discrimination is made between employments which have a future and those which have not. Great care is also taken to see that natural tendencies and abilities fit the child for the position into which he goes. Thus a boy with a mechanical turn of mind would not be recommended for an office position and vice versa.'

The aim of all this is to lessen the number of unemployable men in the future. It is easy to see that unless there is a real interest in the individual child by the masters any such scheme cannot be carried out.

SEALERS REPORT FROM CALIFORNIA

The sealing schooner Thomas F. Bayard, Capt. Blakstad, has reported to her owners, Messrs. Stockham & Maynard, of Victoria, from Monterey, California, where she called for water on March 26th with 181 sealskins on board, and the Pescawha, Capt. Balcom, was reported with 190.

The Thomas F. Bayard has done well, having been on the sealing grounds but two weeks. She left the west coast on March 15th after shipping her Indian crew. The Pescawha left here at the beginning of the year. The schooners report that rough weather prevailed up to about March 7th, there being a number of gales and few days of good hunting weather. There are two other schooners on the southern ground, the Jessie and Lady Mine, which have just reached the sealing area. The Umbrina was lost in collision.

The four schooners of the local fleet will follow the seal herds northward until the season ends at the close of this month, and will then put in to the west coast to land their skins, ship supplies and proceed to the sea otter grounds to hunt the more valuable fur-bearers.

NEW ST. JOHN'S CHURCH TO BE BUILT

Structure Costing $80,000 on Property Just Acquired on Corner of Quadra and Mason Streets

A property comprising one hundred and twenty feet on Quadra street and the same number of feet on Mason street, known as portion of the Lubbe Estate, and an additional sixty feet on Mason street adjoining, has been purchased by a committee of the churchwardens of St. John's Church for the site for their new edifice, which will cost in the neighborhood of $80,000. The sale was concluded yesterday and plans are nearing completion by Mr. Ridgway Wilson, the architect. The purchase price of the property was $25,000.

The new place of worship will be architecturally very handsome. The property is of ample size to allow of a large building being erected. The steeple, which will be of an unique nature, will be in the proximity of 200 feet high, which is somewhat higher than that of the Roman Catholic Cathedral. Two sets of plans have been made and will be adjudicated upon this week by the executive of the church.

AN IMPORTANT CHANGE

This week will witness the beginning of the removal of the Songhees from the reservation that they have occupied for so long a time and for the opening of which to occupation by white people there has been so long-continued and so persistent a demand. This cannot fail to be a very important change. The immediate future of the city will be very largely affected by it, but to what extent and just in what direction one cannot very readily forecast at the present time. Nevertheless the opening of this fine area of land fronting on the harbor, taken in connection with the extension of the E. & N. railway and the construction of the C. N. R., must inevitably lead to results of great importance. We take it for granted that there will be a new bridge across the harbor south of the present railway bridge, and that a new trunk road will be opened across the reserve. From the foot of Johnson street to Russell station in a direct line is a little under 1,000 yards. We do not suppose that a street can be laid out in a direct line between those points, for it would run through the railway yard, and we only mention the distance to show how very material a part the construction of the proposed bridge will play in connection with the most direct thoroughfare possible across the reserve. The difference in distance along such a route and that from the corner of Yates and Government streets to the Fountain will be only slight. We are speaking now without any information as to how it is proposed to subdivide the reserve or what streets will be laid out across it.

That the reserve will be utilized for business and other purposes to some extent at least before the present year is ended is very likely. We are not informed as to any plans that are projected for its utilization in this way, and quite possibly none have yet been formed, for until the final announcement has been made of how the provincial government proposes to deal with the land has been made, it is premature for any one to form plans. Very great interest will attach to this announcement, which we feel sure will be found to be in the best interests of the public.

The union movement must of necessity have its intellectual side, and from its very contentions is forced to present arguments for its maintenance from this standpoint, says the Colorado Industrial Review. The purely "bread and butter" phrase, is but one side of a many sided question and in order to answer satisfactorily questions that are arising daily, it is necessary first to educate ourselves as to the social position of the workers. Labor is the predominating factor in civilization, the so-called natural wealth has no value, except such as is given to it by the use of labor, consequently to use the words of the immortal Lincoln, "Labor is entitled to the first consideration." After a careful reading of the travails of the toiler and his various attempts to better his conditions, one is convinced that labor has advanced economically in just such ratio as he has developed mentally.

THE HINDUS.

The discussion concerning the status of the Hindus in Canada is only one phase of the Asiatic question and its consideration must be approached without passion or prejudice. Some extravagant claims have been made on their behalf, one of them being that they ought to have full rights of citizenship. This is so wholly unreasonable that we are glad to be told on what seems good authority that they themselves do not desire anything of that kind. We are glad also to be assured that the Hindus in British Columbia have nothing to complain of in respect to the manner in which they are personally treated. Possibly an isolated case of injustice may arise, but such cases occur in respect to people of all nationalities and races.

The claim is made on their behalf that the married men among them, who have been here for some time and are doing their best by honest work to earn a living, and successfully so, should be allowed to bring in their wives and children. We do not think this is an unreasonable request, but on the contrary think that it might be a distinct advantage not only to the Hindus themselves, but also to the community, to grant. We can see no good reason why a Hindu, who is earning his living, may not be allowed to have his wife and young children here just as other people are permitted to have theirs.

In respect to the removal of restrictions upon Hindu immigration, we do not think this desirable, although we concede that those who are now in the country have settled into a place in the life of the community and are as a rule doing well. The danger of unrestricted Hindu immigration is that the country would be flooded by people from Hindustan, and this would be very far from being a good thing for them or for us. We admit without argument that the relation of our Hindu fellow-subjects to the other parts of the Empire is one that calls for a more serious consideration than has hitherto been gven it in Canada. It is undoubtedly very much to be wished that the population of that great dependency should feel that wherever they are under the flag they are treated with justice, but we will in Canada be well advised if we go slowly, being content to take one step at a time. We think that to admit the wives and minor children of Hindus now here, without any greater restrictions than we impose upon the wives and children of immigrants from Continental Europe, and of course under proper evidence as to identification, would be simply an act of justice that should not be postponed.

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