

## LUM FOON AND HIS WIFE.

BY REV. FREDERIC J. MASTERS, D.D., OF  
SAN FRANCISCO.

One afternoon, about fifteen years ago, a quiet, thoughtful looking young Chinaman, recently arrived from South China, was walking down Jackson street, San Francisco. Seeing the doors of our mission preaching hall open, he was drawn by curiosity to join the crowd inside. It was a Chinese preacher that was holding forth the word of life, and it was on that afternoon that Lum Foon first heard the Gospel of God's grace and love. His attention had been arrested: he procured Christian books, read them over and over again, and soon became a daily listener at the preaching hall. The truth found in him a receptive heart, and when he accepted the Saviour it was with a strength of full conviction, and with an enthusiasm that is not always witnessed in Chinese converts. He was baptized by Rev. Dr. Otis Gibson, and became a diligent student of the Scriptures under that good man. No sooner had Lum Foon been brought under the power of the Gospel than he was filled with the desire to bring others to Christ, and more especially to carry the good news of salvation to his parents, kinsmen, and clansmen in his village home across the seas.

He opened a drapery business on Stockton street. Instead of the usual heathen ceremonies—the setting up of household gods, burning of incense and firecrackers—he took his Bible, read aloud a chapter of Scripture, asked God's blessing upon his business, and wrote out and signed a solemn vow that if the Lord would prosper him to the extent of making four thousand dollars he would give up his business, return to China, and devote his life and fortune as a self-supporting missionary in his native *yen*. Business soon began to prosper, but Lum Foon never allowed that solemn vow to be forgotten. He was anxious to make up for his lack of educational advantages, and employed a Chinese scholar to come after business hours to give him instruction in Chinese. In four years he had mastered the Chinese classics, had made great progress in Chinese composition, and then purchased every commentary upon the Holy Scriptures and every theological book and Christian tract published in the Chinese language, and commenced a systematic study of the whole system of Christian truth. He spent upwards of a thousand dollars in obtaining this instruction, the better to qualify him for the great work he believed the Lord had called him to do.

Lum Foon married a very remarkable woman, whose history is more tragic and thrilling than his own. She was a native of Heong Shan. In infancy she had been taken by her opium smoking father and offered as a security for a debt, and failing to redeem her at the appointed time she was sold into slavery. Here began years of incredible hardship and woe. Sold into the hands of a cruel mistress, beaten and abused from day to day, bound down to hard tasks too heavy for her strength, escaping to the mountains, hiding among the graves, living on wild fruit, only to be discovered, recaptured, and dragged back again to servitude and torture, she often longed to die. At last she was sold, carried to Hong-Kong, from thence shipped to California, where she arrived in 1871, and was there offered as a bond servant for two hundred and fifty dollars. Then followed two years of more hard work, poor fare, and cruel blows. One March evening, 1873, having heard of the Methodist Episcopal Mission in San Francisco, she watched her opportunity and fled to the Home. Dr. Otis Gibson heard a violent ring at the bell and opened the door. The poor trembling creature was taken into the Home and protected from her persecutors. At the mission she showed extraordinary intelligence. She soon acquired an excellent knowledge of the English language, and, best of all, became a true Christian.

It was under that excellent lady, Miss L. S. Templeton, that the stronger elements of her character—a character so dissimilar to the average woman of her race—was formed. Miss Templeton writes: "I have a bit of soiled paper in my possession which I value very highly, because it is the record of her own con-

duct for a whole month when I was absent from her. To teach her habits of self-examination I requested her to mark each day that she felt she had done what the Master would approve with a figure one, and the days that she felt she had displeased her Saviour with a cipher. The record contains three ciphers, and I know these failures caused her serious regret." "Another interesting incident comes to mind," says Miss Templeton. "One day she was riding in the street car, sitting near the door. When the car stopped, a boy jumped upon the platform, spat in her face, and jumped off. The angry flush mounted to her cheek, and then a better impulse took possession of her. She said, turning to her teacher, 'Never mind, Jesus was spat upon; I will bear it like him.'"

This is the lady who became the wife of Lum Foon. She was a woman of rare gifts. Her conversation whether in Chinese or in the excellent English she commanded, often flashed with wit, and the intelligent opinions she expressed on the leading questions of the day astonished everyone who heard her. She was a diligent student of the Scriptures, and could hold her own in debate with the preachers on the interpretation of difficult passages of Scripture. The prosperity of her husband's business was largely owing to her shrewdness, good judgment, industry, and thrift.

One day in 1889 Lum Foon came to the writer and told him that he had made four thousand dollars in his business and felt

more. Husband and wife were now of one mind. I saw evidences of packing up. The whole family were to embark for China on the next steamer. It took a great wrench to tear this woman from the country and friends that had made her, by God's grace, a refined Christian gentlewoman. To many who bade them goodbye on board the steamer it was the most inspiring and hopeful scene that had ever been witnessed on that wharf. A Chinese Christian family going forth as missionaries to their own land with their little fortune all consecrated to the service of the church. How inscrutable are God's ways! Within nine months of their arrival in China, mother, son, daughter, half of Lum's family, were laid in the grave. "Swear unto me," said the mother, when near her death, to the nurse who had attended her during her sickness; "promise me that when I am dead you will not dishonor my corpse with any heathen rites, for I belong to the Holy Church of Jesus Christ." "Well said, indeed; well said," the woman replied. "It shall be as you desire." After that her eyes closed, a sweet smile lighted up her face, she was at peace. The poor husband hurried to his wife's side. He was inconsolable. In a letter to the writer he told of heathen kinsmen who stood round him like Job's and David's comforters and asked him, "Where is now thy God? Is not this an evidence that thy religion is false?" "Oh," said he, "it is hard to understand. I am like one bewildered, not knowing what all this means, but I wish you and the dear brethren to



MR. AND MRS. LUM FOON AND THEIR CHILDREN.

bound to carry out his vow made years ago. There were difficulties in his way upon which he asked my advice. His wife was opposed to his going, and had positively refused to accompany him. I hastened to their house. She met me with a face indicating calm resolve. "It is true," said she, "I am opposed to Lum's going as a missionary. He is not fitted for the work. God has called him to be a successful man of business, but not to be a preacher. There are thousands of men better qualified than he for the work. Let him give one thousand dollars per year to the Church and stay with his business. As for me, I love America. I want my children educated and brought up in this country, and will not allow them to be taken back to China to be thrown as lambs among wolves!"

Here was a difficulty greater than I anticipated. The man was equally determined. "I must go," said Lum. "I have vowed to the Lord, and woe is that man who vows and refuses to pay his vows." He had his finger on half a dozen texts of Scripture to the same effect, and then pointing to his wife he said: "If I refuse to pay my vows I feel God will take from me every cent I have ever made, and I shall have woe and grief all my days." Never was any pastor placed in a more embarrassing position. We prayed for guidance; and left the matter in God's hands.

A month passed and I was called in one

pray for me, that our heavenly Father suffer me not to fail in faith and purpose through discouragement and despair."

Our prayers were not in vain. The soul of the bereaved husband came out of that trial furnace brighter, purer, and stronger. He immediately commenced building a schoolhouse and church at his own expense, and presented this property to the Church forever. The church he has built stands high above all the surrounding property, and is known the country round as the "Jesus house," and he is called the "Jesus man." Blessed name for God's servant and God's house! The school is crowded with scholars, and every day divine service and Gospel preaching is heard in that mission chapel. Scores have been brought to God through the labors of this devoted son of our church, and the fountains of beneficence opened by Lum Foon's self-sacrificing life shall flow on and on to bless the ages that are yet to come.

A son and a daughter remain to bless Lum's home. The daughter is adopted and supported by Miss Laura Templeton, of San Francisco; a dear Christian lady, who has Lum Foon's permission to take his daughter and educate her for medical missionary work among her own people. —*Gospel in all Lands.*

TWENTY Christians can fight heroically where one can suffer greatly, and be strong, and be still. —*Ouyler.*

## THE POSSIBLE CHRIST.

BY MRS. MERRILL E. GATES.

Once a curious stone was shown me. It was a dull brown pebble, hardly an inch in length, fractured roughly on its sides and surface. Nothing could have been more commonplace or uninteresting.

My friend held the little stone in the light of the window. I could see in it nothing extraordinary. She moved it where the light fell with greater intensity from a different angle. Then the profile of a man's face formed itself, like a dissolving view, out of the lights and shadows of the projecting roughnesses of the stone.

Although the likeness of a human countenance was wholly accidental, it was finer and clearer than any cameo cut by tools. Ever the higher light and the increasing angle of vision brought out every feature with the clean-cut effect of sculpture. It grew into a face of exquisite spirituality. An expression of compassionate love and supreme self-sacrifice rested on every lineament.

The hair seemed to fall over a low forehead. The eye was open. The nose was straight and delicate. The mouth was shaded by the drooping of the moustache. The chin was strong and well moulded. Grecian purity of outline mingled with Hebrew fervor of expression.

As the combined purity and fervor became intensified, under light more modified, the meaning of the expressive face became almost fathomless.

Now, with a little change in the direction from which the light fell, the eyelid seemed to close upon the eye. Lower and lower it fell, till sleep spread over the face like a veil. Heavier shadows passed over it, till sleep seemed turned to death.

But again the shifting light caused the eyelid to re-open, and the beautiful look of life returned with added refinement and power.

It was almost the face of the Christ, such a face as the reverent painters of the early days of art saw as they sat waiting for the immortal vision. While we looked, it grew even more luminous and loving.

With a sudden movement the light changed, and my friend held in her hand nothing but a dull bit of common, brown limestone.

Then I knew I had seen a vision of man and of his possible transformed appearance as God looks at him in the light of his own everlasting love, and as we may look at him in that same light under the new angle of vision that we get as we place ourselves at the cross. As the ray of Christ's love falls on every man, shall we not see, fractured as he may be by sin and the abrasions of life, dull and uninteresting as he may be in himself,—shall we not see in each human soul a deeply traced, beautifully moulded image of the possible Christ!

O that with purged vision, I might see  
In every man the Christ that is  
Or else the Christ to be!  
So, dispossessed of scorn,  
With love alone  
To look into the eyes of every one,  
And call each one a brother,  
Since there lies  
The image of my Lord  
Deep in his eyes.  
Or if I cannot find his image there,—  
The One among ten thousand only fair,—  
Then will I pray that soon my Christ may be  
(The Christ who died for this my brother and for me)  
To him a living, bright reality.  
—*Golden Rule.*

## GIVE THEM AIR.

An interesting experiment that proves the value of fresh air in winter, even for very young and delicate children, was tried a few months ago in a well-known babies' hospital. All the sickly babies that were suffering from chronic indigestion and lack of nutrition, and who would not improve in spite of good food, perfectly ventilated rooms and careful bathing, were taken to the top ward of the hospital, where all the windows were open wide, wrapped as for the street and put in their perambulators. They were kept in this room from two to four hours daily and soon showed a marked improvement. Their cheeks became rosy, they gained weight and appetite, and would often fall asleep and remain so during the whole time they were in the air. Very delicate children had bags of hot water placed at their feet. It is recorded in the account of his experiment that not one child took cold as a result of it.