

and paid for, and some are known to have gained admission within the palace itself, two sets having been purchased by a eunuch of the Emperor's house. hold, that he and a friend might read them aloud in company.

Of course, so marvellous an event as that half-starved blind beggars should be cared for by foreigners and endowed with apparently miraculous powers, has attracted considerable attention amongst all classes, and rumours concerning it have gone forth to distant parts. One blind man having heard of this wonderful thing, travelled three hundred miles to put himself under Mr. Murray's tuition. Another is found to be endowed with talents which seem to fit him specially for the ministry, so he is to be transferred to the care of the Rev. Jonathan Lees, who has an institution at Tien-tsin, for preparing candidates for holy orders.

So the blind men of Peking, who have hitherto been a race of cruelly neglected outcasts, are now learning that a door of hope is open to them, and a course of true usefulness may be theirs.

By a very singular coincidence (considering for how many centuries the blind of China and Japan have been left uncared for), a very similar effort for their weal was commenced in Japan, in 1876, by Mr. Go-ble, a partially blind Japanese gentleman, who, though he had never seen or touched a book printed for the use of the blind, worked out for himself a method of printing on wooden blocks in Roman letters, a system conveying an impression of all the sounds in the Japanese language, spelt phonetically. In this, he printed a small book for the use of his fellow-sufferers, and found, to his joy, that blind boys could learn to read it with far less trouble and toil than their seeing brothers could learn to read the difficult Chinese characters in which Japanese books are printed. One of his pupils was a lad of eighteen who had been blind since he was three years old. Within two weeks from the day when he had received the phonetic alphabet, he had mastered the whole book.

This process of printing was, however, so cumbersome that Mr. Go-ble appealed to all European institutions for the Blind, to help him in improving it, that he might be able to scatter educational books among the blind all over Japan. It is useless to say that such a suggestion was not heeded, and after some study, Mr. Lilley and Dr. Faulds devised a system which is found to work admirably. The Gospel of St. Mark was first prepared in raised letters. Classes for teaching the blind have now been formed at Yokohama and Mishima, and the ease with which they acquire the art of reading surpasses all expectation. The very last gift of Mr. Thomas Coats, of Paisley, ere his much-lamented death,^{*} was an Ullman embossing press for the use of the blind in Japan.

I cannot conclude this reference to Mr. Murray's voluntary work among the blind, without a few words concerning the main object of his official work. He is, as I have said, one of the numerous colporteurs sent out by the National Bible Society of Scotland, to endeavour to circulate the Scriptures among China's millions.

The effort, which at first was attended with manifold discouragements, has gradually gained ground, and thanks to a happy combination of patient gentleness with most resolute determination, Mr. Murray and his pony-cart are recognised institutions of the capital. Wherever there is a chance of effecting a sale, there he takes up his post—no matter at what inconvenience. At the gate of the Examination Hall he stands while the students from every corner of the empire come forth after their labours, and thus, in one day, about seven hundred copies, each containing a Gospel and four Epistles are disposed of. Another day he takes his stand on the bridge at the entrance to the Imperial City, the busiest place in Peking, where "all under heaven," pass and repass. Here he, in one day, sells upwards of a hundred books.

^{*} He was a generous supporter of the Bible Society.