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Inside a Mandarin's House.

(By Mrs. Fahmy, of Chiang Chiu, in 'The Chronicle of the London Missionary Society.)

One day last summer a Chinese inquirer, whom I am in the habit of visiting and teaching, sent her son to ask me to come to her home at once as she had visitors who were anxious to hear me 'talk the doctrine.' I said I would be there in half an hour, but ere I started two other messengers arrived, one after another, to make sure of me! I went with them, and was introduced to the visitor, the wife of a mandarin, who told me how she was longing to hear the 'doctrine,' and she hoped I would speak and read to her. I was with them fully two hours, and did what I could in that time to enlighten their minds. They said the doctrine was truly wonderful and 'good to hear,' and that they had never heard such good news before. They listened most attentively, and when I asked questions on what they had been told, I was surprised to find that they had taken in so much on a first hearing. I rather think my friend whom they were visiting must have been telling them all she knew before I arrived. I was asked to read a rhyme on bound feet, and was glad I had brought it with me. The rhyme is rather lengthy, but cleverly written by one of our pastors, and the reading of it was enjoyed by everyone present, the listeners laughing a good deal and exclaiming every few lines; 'Quite true! Very true! Every sentence is correct!'

On leaving, the mandarin's wife gave me a pressing invitation to visit at her house, and said there were a great many womenfolk there who would like to hear the gospel. I gladly accepted the invitation, and asked if she would like to visit me. She was delighted, and said she would come without delay.

Next day a message was sent, to the effect that the mandarin's wife and several friends would come the following morning. They came and stayed a long time, looking at everything and asking no end of questions. The cleanliness seemed to strike them more than anything else. 'Why,' said they, 'we could eat our dinner off your floor!' We had another talk about things eternal, and I found the interest was very keen. I promised to return their visit very soon, and would have done so, of course, had we not been sent for by the Consul to go down to the Port of Amoy at once, and we ladies had to hastily pack up and leave our work, much to our regret. Fully three months passed before we were allowed to return, and I can't tell you how thankful we were to get back to our work and our homes again, nor how grateful we were to God that this city had been spared, although these three months had been fraught with threatenings and persecution of converts, and it seemed at one time as though the churches and houses were doomed to destruction.

About a fortnight ago I at last found time to pay my promised visit. In the morning a message was sent, informing them that I would come at two o'clock in the afternoon. I found several men at the door waiting to receive me, and, after getting within the outer doors, was received by the mandarin's wife, who led me by the hand into the sit-

ting-hall. At once a crowd of women surrounded me—daughters-in-law, grand-daughters, nurses, and a large number of slaves with large feet. After I was seated a pretty young girl came quickly forward and almost took possession of me, sitting down at length on my left and holding my hand. I recognized the face, yet could not remember where I had met her. I found she was the niece of a small mandarin in the city, who is quite a good friend of ours and who takes a delight in copying foreigners, and that she had become the wife of the youngest son of the family in the house where I was visiting. Then I remembered her well, and was able to tell her I had seen her uncle and aunt the previous day. I could talk no longer to her just then, for the women were clamoring to

the bird out of the room, which she did; but no sooner had I commenced to talk again, when in he ran by another door, and the crowing began again! I had just to get on the best way I could, for I found that there were so many exits to the room that as soon as Mr. Chanticicer was put out at one, back he came by another! I have often remarked that I could not kill a bird, even were I on a desert island and birds the only means of sustenance, but I draw the line at that particular fowl.

In spite of all, we had a good time; my listeners seemed intensely interested and deeply impressed, I thought. I was then requested to read the rhyme on bound feet, and, as usual, it was much enjoyed. Indeed, several of the women said they would un-



INTERIOR OF MANDARIN'S HOUSE.

me to make haste and talk about the 'doctrine.' I told them as soon as they were all quiet I would begin, and asked them to get their bamboo stools and sit around.

Well, the women were very quiet indeed, and the children were so interested in gazing at the foreigner that I could not complain of their disturbing the peace. The interruption came from a different source—a great cock denounced me fearfully, and the noise he made was such as I never had heard before from one of his kind. He came and stood in the middle of the hall, and made the most terrible noises. If a look could have killed him he would have dropped dead on the spot; but, nothing daunted, he went at it as hard as ever he could! I tried to get on, but found I was overtaxing my voice badly. So I asked one of the women to put

bind, and my little friend, who had never loosed hold of my arm, said she was determined to unbind, and asked if the doctor could give her medicine to make the unbinding less painful. I inquired whether her husband would object, and she declared he would not. She told me that since she had been taught about God she had ceased to worship idols in any form, and, she continued, 'I have nothing idolatrous in my room; my husband lets me have my own way about that; come upstairs and see.'

We then went upstairs to the bridal chamber, with its pretty red silk door curtain. I found the room very different from the others. It was beautifully clean, the furniture most brilliantly polished, and, sure enough, no idols or incense-burners there. After again drinking tea, and politely refus-