

upon small Mongolian horses, which served them on their evangelistic errands about the city, and they had just turned a sharp angle of a street when they caught sight of a rabble before the ancient Temple of the Lamas.

The temper of the people was not at once apparent but something in their attitude made the foreigners draw rein. A repressed guttural of dissent seemed to be the prevailing note—a dissent suspicious rather than violent as if it felt itself weakening under the influence of a voice which rose above it.

The voice and accent were strangely compelling; for a moment they were not localised by the missionary's wife, and if she were startled by the purity of tone and phrase, it was because the old classic language of China—*Wen-li*—now greeted her ears for the first time as a spoken tongue; and, as she was afterwards to reflect, it was like a recitation from Homer in a modern Greek marketplace.

In another moment Ruth recognised its source. A man stood in full sight of the crowd, the centre of a dozen Lamas grouped in a semi-circle on the stone steps leading to the temple; and it was to the priests he was speaking. At first glance he might have been mistaken for a Peking beggar, to whom copper *cash* were matter for whining importunity, for his bare feet were horny from much travel, and his clothing was no more than a medley of rags saturated with the smell of incense. But the nobility of the head, and the sweetness of the voice above the Chinese guttural, were different tokens.