

**Haifa and Dr. Webster.** On our table is an interesting document; a petition from a number of residents in Haifa to the Foreign Mission Committee, regarding Dr. Webster. As already known he was our missionary to the Jews in Palestine, and after prospecting the country he settled at Haifa, a small town on the Mediterranean, at the foot of Mt. Carmel. A few months later he was called to a chair in the Syrian Protestant College at Beyrout. With the consent of the F. M. Com. he accepted, and our mission in Palestine is in the meantime closed.

The petition, written in Arabic, with an English translation on the opposite page, is as follows:—

Haifa, Palestine,  
June 5th, '95.

Hamilton Cassels, Esq.,  
Sir,

We, the undersigned beg to take the liberty of sending this our petition to you, and beseech you to read it with close attention. It is with great sorrow that we heard of the Committee's order to Dr. Webster to remove to Beyrout. We are sure if the Committee had known how much his services are required here, she would not have passed that order. We will not overrate them if we say that they have given life to many poor people here who could not afford being treated by any other doctor. We are sure if the Committee were to know how many hundreds of these poor people are in this district, how miserable and necessitous they are, she would sympathize with them and never allow the removal of Dr. Webster, who is so kind to them, so humble and polite to others, and so true and fervent, that we cannot think for one moment of his departure without the feel of pain.

We therefore would entreat you, for heaven's sake, to keep, if possible, Dr. Webster amongst us, and if not, to send another doctor of the same principles to fill his post. We and all the rest of the people of this town are very sensible to your kindness, and own our gratitude and obligation to you for the beneficial work you kindly started amongst us.

In fine we warmly beg you to let us know what you would decide upon this matter, by a reply addressed to Mr. Abdulla Ballosh, who is good enough to give us this translation.

Most obliged and grateful.

Here follows a curious feature, the long list of seals and signatures, in various devices and tongues; Hebrew and Arabic, Greek and Latin, English, German, Russian, and French, dead and living languages, strangely intermingling, printed, stamped, or scrawled, in crowded confusion to the end.

**Training** The Presbytery of Indore has prepared a scheme for the training of Bible readers and Catechists, which will correspond in some measure with the course in Theological Colleges at home

## Snake Worship in China.

BY REV. J. GOFORTH.

Chang-te-Fu, Honan,  
23th June, 1895.

PRESBYTERIAN RECORD:

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I am happy to tell you that all the members of the Mission are enjoying excellent health at present, and we are very thankful for the quiet which prevails since the war. As far as we can see, the war has been no hindrance to our work, and we are hoping that, on account of the reverses which China has suffered, her people will be more ready to receive us.

I have thought that your readers might be interested in hearing something of the snake worship among the Chinese.

In the beginning, Satan adopted the form of a serpent to deceive. At that time his plan proved so successful that ever since he seems loath to give it up. Eve's descendants are ever ready to be duped by this device. The Apostle Paul charges the heathen of his time with the crime of turning away from God to worship dead men, birds, beasts, and creeping things. In the Apostle's mind, heathen folly reaches its lowest stage at "creeping things."

Eighteen centuries have passed away, and in spite of the best light which China's greatest sage has given, we find her millions, from Emperor to peasant, reverencing snakes. The Chinese believe that the serpent deity presides over rain, seas, lakes, rivers and wells.

In this city, within the precincts of one of the old temples, there is a sacred well, said to be connected by an underground passage with the eastern ocean. It is believed that the sea god comes along this passage and at times reveals himself in the well.

The Chinese make use of this deity when they want to send the Emperor's tribute rice northward through the "Grand Canal." The name "Grand Canal" sounds well, but the reality is disappointing. It would almost require some supernatural flooding to let the rice boats pass along.

It is reported that some years ago about one thousand of these boats reached the upper end of the canal at Lin Ching, but on account of the low water were unable to pass out into the river. The official of the district was much concerned about it. He went in state daily to the temple of the river prince, pleading for a rise of water, but finally, when it seemed the god was not going to be moved, he went to the temple, armed not with words of supplication, but with a club, and battered the image to pieces.

It has come to our notice how the devil uses the serpent to hinder the true doctrines of God. There is a district north-east of this city, comprising about one hundred villages, where the floods from the Chang river this spring destroy