

## Changed Prospects in North China.

A LETTER FROM BISHOP SCOTT.

(*Mosten Field, November, 1898.*)

In view of the extremely important changes which have taken place in China within the past six months—changes which immediately affect her relations to several foreign powers in a most vital manner, and which must, humanly speaking, usher in a state of things widely different from that which has hitherto obtained—I feel that you will expect some communication from me, as charged with the oversight of the Society's Missions in this country.

I need refer but briefly to the "concessions" granted by the Chinese Government on the representation of Her Majesty's Minister at Peking. They comprise the opening of the internal waterways of China to British and other steamers; the undertaking not to alienate, by lease or otherwise, to any foreign power the large if somewhat indefinite region known as the Yang-tze Valley; the retention of the post of Inspector-General of Customs in the hands of a British subject while British trade predominates in China, and the opening of more treaty-ports, and especially of one in the Province of Hunan.

To come nearer to our own part of the country, a part more directly affected by the changes referred to above. The lease of Port Arthur to Russia, with right of building a railway connecting the port with their great trans-Siberian system, is an unmistakable sign—not to put it more strongly—that Russian influence must predominate ever increasingly in Manchuria and in Northern China generally. Whether this will mean, as it should, the gradual extension of the Orthodox Church over these regions I cannot say; but at present I gather that the work of that Church has not extended beyond Russian territory.

There is one point which affects us more immediately, and that is the opening of a new port in the northern part of the Gulf of Pechili, close to Shan-hai-kuan (where the Great Wall abuts on the sea). This place is in the neighbourhood of a sea side resort which has sprung up within the last two years, easy of access from Tientsin by means of the railway; and the "port" will probably include this watering-place. In any case it will mean another place for which the ministrations of the Church must be provided in the near future.

That, however, which most nearly touches us and our work is the changed prospects in the Province of Shan-tung. The sudden acquisition by Germany of Kiao-Chau, the establishment of a line of steamers between that port and Shanghai, Chefoo, and Tientsin, the prospects of railways being at once built to connect

the port with the capital of the province (Chi-nan fu), with other important centres, and finally with Tientsin and Peking—all this makes one feel that the Shan-tung Province is likely to change with wonderful rapidity. Again, as in the case of the newly-opened port in Chihli, so here, Kiao Chau will have its population of English people, and will require the ministrations of the Church. Then the acquisition of Wei-hai-wei—only forty miles from Chefoo—as a naval station by Great Britain (though I presume it will have its own chaplains) makes another point in the province whence influence will be exerted on the country around. Last year, with the assent of the Bishops gathered in conference in Shanghai, a proposal was submitted to the Archbishop of Canterbury for the erection of a separate bishopric for Shan-tung. Since then events have developed with startling rapidity; and while the proposed railways will, if built, lessen some of the present difficulties, yet the prospect of ever-widening facilities for work renders it highly advisable that the Missions in the province should be under the direction of a Bishop on the spot. One of the slight objections to treating the Shan-tung Province as a whole as a separate bishopric—viz., the difficulty of reaching T'ai-An from Chefoo—will be entirely obviated when the new German line is made connecting Kiao-Chau with Chi-nan-fu, for it will pass very near T'ai-An; while if a second (contemplated) line is laid down (from Tientsin to the south), it will pass through T'ai-An itself.

This brings me to a point which I wish to emphasize, the interest and importance of the missionary work in this district. In the neighbourhood of Peking we inherit work—flourishing, thank God, is still growing and flourishing—from the C.M.S. In Shan-tung the work is the direct outgrowth of your own Mission sent out in 1874.

Apart from its religious associations—and these are not insignificant, for immediately behind T'ai-An city the great sacred mountain, visited annually, it is said, by nearly one million pilgrims, towers up to the highest point in Shan-tung; while the birthplace and burial-place of Confucius is only distant about sixty miles to the south—apart from these interesting features, a glance at the map will show that the western part of Shan-tung is right on the route of the first trunk lines which will be made from Peking to the south, and will be opened up in a marked degree by the improvements in locomotion.

I have just come from a three weeks' visit to the Missions in that part; and while there is nothing of a sensational nature to record, I am full of thankfulness at the steady, quiet progress which is being made, both at T'ai-An, where Mr. Brown has taken Mr. Sprent's place, and at Ping-Yin, where Mr. Griffith has been carrying on Mr. Iliff's work during the furlough of the latter in England. I should like to see this Mission generally

strengthened, for though there are many Roman Catholics at work, and latterly several Protestant missionaries also, yet the Church of England, having been the first to occupy the city, has a well-recognized position, and she ought to have representatives, either English or native, in each of the departments under the rule of T'ai-An-Fu.

While on the subject of extension, Lung-hua-tien, in the Chihli Province, should shortly be made a fresh centre. Our little body of Christians there has held firmly to its Church Faith, but the distance from Yung-Ching, whose resident priest has charge of the station, forms a very serious hindrance to its development, and moreover injuriously affects the work at Yung-Ching itself. The place is in the midst of a district where the Roman Catholics are strong, and their attitude everywhere is increasingly aggressive. Two men preparing to take up this work, and a second man to support Mr. Allen in his work in Peking and to relieve him when his furlough comes, are urgently needed in the northern part of the diocese.

But I did not intend to enter into minute details of our own present needs. I trust that the wholly unprecedented condition of affairs in this great Empire may induce the Society (S.P.G.) to face the question whether the time has not come for a large increase in the scale of their operations in China. Is it too early to suggest that a scheme should be carefully considered by which a bishop and three priests should be planted in a chosen centre in each of the provinces in this "diocese" still untouched by any work of the Anglican Church—i.e., Shansi, Shensi, Honan, and Kansu? It seems to me essential, if missionaries are sent so far into the interior, that a head should be sent with them. It would be wholly impossible for any bishop in a coast province to "oversee" missionaries in any of the parts which I have named until railways connect these distant regions with the seaboard. Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries are working in all these distant provinces, and, in spite of the well-known difficulty attending the consecration of bishops for countries outside Her Majesty's dominions, the Church might surely find a way to claim her part in the establishment of the Kingdom of God in these far-off regions. It seems likely that the changed condition of things to which I have alluded above will ere long lead to the residence of Englishmen and others in inland towns of China, in which case there would be obvious grounds for the provision of the ministry of the Church.

The people of China are more favourably inclined towards the enlightenment which "foreigners" have to bring to them than they have ever been before, and this attitude of mind will speedily have its effect in the way in which the Gospel of Christ is regarded. The great "brazen gates" are at length open. Up to within a short time ago the work of opening