

He was naturally gifted with an unusually sweet disposition, and schooled himself to be brave and patient, because any pining or show of distress would grieve his parents. But this conversation with the Chinese gardener was the first of many, and from Lipu Hubert learned a higher, nobler reason for patience and long suffering.

At first the Chinese had spoken of the goodness of God and the mercy that His love for us made Him show. Then he told of the passion and sufferings of Jesus Christ, and it was this recital that Hubert liked best of all to hear. He told his parents that Lipu had been taught beautiful things by the Catholic Sisters at Ning-po, where he had worked before coming into Mr. Hurst's service. Seeing the boy happy with his new friend they told Lipu to look after him when he was in the garden, thus setting his own attendant, A-tching, free to do other work, at the same time easing Lipu's conscience, for though he loved to speak of all the missionaries had told him, he feared to neglect the tasks he was paid to perform.

All through the summer months this strange course of instruction went on, till Hubert knew as much Christian doctrine as his teacher could impart. He had learned all the prayers that the nuns had taught in their classes, and he began to repeat them morning and night, as Lipu told him he did himself.

The first time that his mother saw his little wasted hands joined, his blue eyes raised to heaven, and a look of more perfect happiness on his features than she had ever seen on them before, her heart smote her at not having taught him herself; and even though the "Hail Mary" followed "Our Father" from his lips, she did not check or chide him for what she could see gave him so pure a joy.

As the autumn drew near the boy seemed to grow weaker. Lipu sometimes thought he saw a foreglimpse of heaven in the innocent, patient eyes, but his parents noticed no change in him, and though they knew the flickering, feeble light must soon pass out of their sight forever, it came as a shock to Mr. Hurst when Hubert spoke to him one evening of his approaching death. They had been talking of his eleventh birthday, which was soon to be celebrated, and Hubert had spoken in tones of heart-felt longing.