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A Missionary's Return to China.

(By Mrs. Emma D. Smith, of Pang-Chuang, in 'Missionary Herald'.)

I alighted from a Chinese cart in the dearest front-door yard in all China on the evening of November 21, 1897, after an absence of four years and a half. The first impression that I had was that Shantung hearts beat true and loyal as ever, for there, out in the cold, and waiting to welcome me with a radiant smile, was Mrs. Hu, my own dear 'Sunny Heart.' She is a cripple, and gang-planks are narrow, but she had crept on board the steamer to see me off; so that hers had been one of the last faces I had seen in 1893, as it was now one of the first to greet me back in 1897. A little later I realized that I had been away from Shantung for some time, when a great chorus of song burst from the front verandah.

One quiet, warm Sunday before I left for America four wee girls had stolen on to that same verandah, to the front door, with the petition, 'Ming T'ai T'ai, we would like to unbind our feet and have some new shoes.' That was the beginning of the girls' school. The little prisoners let out of jail that day were full of glee. The unbound toes did not seem to pain them at all, and the children capered about so that the pretty silk shoes were all shabby by night. But, praise God! the wedge was in at last. Somebody had unbound their feet in Shantung. Had I only been away four years and a half? One of the helpers had said, at the first meeting of the Anti-Foot-binding Society, that if the thirty people there pulled together they could change the custom of the whole country-side in twenty years. How wonderful it seemed—those tall fine-looking girls, the older class, and the younger ones, with character, training, thought, in their faces; really scholars, and nearly all free-footed as myself! Thank the Lord! How could I be expected to keep the tears back?

While I was recovering from this, and trying to get warm, another glad burst of unlooked-for welcome brought me to the verandah once more, where I found the boys' school. What a little army the forty looked! And how big and manly the older ones had grown to be, and how their fine training had transformed them! Later, when I came to have meetings with them it was like a dream to find the little raw, crude children I had left, who could only be fed milk with a spoon, now ready for the best I had to give. They were eager, bright, quick with their bibles, ready to pray, and at home in their hymn books. Oh, what a beautiful parish in the two schools!

Next came, with a deep sense of gratitude, the change I saw in our dear Christian women. Not that they were not always dear and always Christian to the core—but oh! they had been, some of the best of them, so dull! But I believe there never was a mission station in the world where more resolute, unflinching, persistent, tremendous work has been put in by single ladies in teaching rudiments than here. They simply had to do it. It took colossal faith to believe that such women, beginning in middle life, could learn enough to be of any use to



A LITTLE SUFFERER WITH BOUND FEET.

themselves or others. But they were like a ship on the ways. During the years while I was away they reached the point where the friction was overcome. The faith and patience of the (single lady) saints had at last launched them into the glorious deep sea of God's own Word. The dear, precious, stupid old women I had left could actually find their places in the New Testament and read nicely and intelligently! I could have hugged every last one of them for joy and surprise as I daily sat at prayers with them, and actually took it in, that one need not depend on a crumb tray and a brush, but could really give them a whole slice off the loaf now.

Another thing struck home, and that was, how they had learned to give. In all those early years we always knew they couldn't give anything because they did not have control of any money. But it was a single lady missionary, who had an inspiration, and stirred them up and started them, and

the Lord blessed and followed up all the teaching. And, as I went to place after place, making my round of visits, that I might see all the field before Miss Porter and I divided up the work, one and another woman would bring her gift for the church, a little string of cash with a bamboo stick attached to it giving her name, thus showing that she had paid her yearly subscription. Sometimes my box would be quite heavy with the copper cash. To be sure, many had lost their tickets, and some did not bring their cash in time to get into the year's accounts, but there was a good strong current setting in the direction of regular gifts.

Self-supporting station classes seemed almost as remarkable as a New Testament miracle. How one's thought went back to the days when it was like pulling eye-teeth to get men to take the trouble to bring their wives and daughters here once a year to study a few days. What a joy to know that