

## A TRIP TO HONAN, III.

BY REV. J. MCGILLIVRAY.

WELL, boys, if I remember aright I promised to take you on this trip to see how the missionaries do their work—I should say some of their work, for a great deal of it cannot be seen.

Let us set out at once with the missionary to a preaching chapel or church. It is an old vacant building in one of the busiest streets, once used as a store. As we come up, the old caretaker, who has been lazily sipping tea on the shop steps of a neighbour, swaggers across the street and begins to take off his shutters. You see there is no congregation inside ready to hear the minister preach, as with us.

By and by, out of curiosity, a few Chinese stroll into the room, sit down on the benches, and smoke away.

Now, how does the missionary begin the service? Give out a hymn? Offer up a prayer? No, for then they would only laugh and sneer at him. Well, how? The old caretaker fishes out of a corner an old tea-pot, goes out to a tea shop, and brings it back full of hot tea. The missionary, then waves the tea pot aloft and asks them to drink with him. After that, they are ready to listen to him for a little. He tries to draw them into chats about religion, their own or his; but they dodge his questions and are ready to talk on any other subject but that.

Then, too, the congregation, if it can be called by that name, changes every few minutes. They are coming and going. There is no time to get down to real work. As a missionary put it recently "We must do what we can and pray that God's Holy Spirit, like a lightning flash, will reveal the truth."

Again, think of the interruptions. Look there is a man at the meeting with a little pig whose squealing music is too much for the missionary's ear and so the happy owner has to leave. There goes a boy with a small fox dangling by the nose from a long pole? Just think what a difference at home, with us, old and young, quietly seated listening to the sermon. Very seldom do we even hear a

snore from a weary sleeper on the back pews; but in Honan, the congregation is talking, laughing, smoking, singing, and yelling, while the patient missionary is trying so hard to get them to listen to his glad news. But, day and day, he works away, hoping and praying that God's true light may enter some dark heart.

When the work is beginning in a new field, the missionaries do most of their work outside. They go in pairs, two and two like the disciples of Jesus, and travel from village to village. Let us away with them on one of these trips.

But, first, let me tell you that 'fairs' are very common in China. The people come from long distances to one central place to buy and sell. These fairs seem to be so fixed that the fair of one town does not come at the same time as at another town. Every thing that can be sold is there, from a kite to a donkey. It is real fun to watch the big crowds moving back and forth, swaying like the waves of the sea, driven along by a red-hot desire to make 'cash' (the smallest Chinese coin).

Well, the missionaries see their chance and go to these fairs to sell Testaments, single gospels, tracts, and other books—not, of course, to make money, but to win souls for Jesus.

First of all, they pick out a shady spot under some tree, if they can get it, and rent it as long as they want it. Then, putting a board down before them on the ground, (if they cannot rent a table) and spreading out their books upon it, they begin to shout their wares till a crowd gathers around; when they begin by explaining why they are there. They come to tell them of a great and good religious teacher—called Jesus.

They are not talking long when some one in the crowd will shout out, "We, too, have a great religious teacher—Confucius". The missionaries will, then, speak of Confucius, and say that he was great, indeed, but that he couldn't tell them how to become good, nor, could he tell them any thing about Death and what was beyond Death. For he used to say "I know not life and, how then, can I know Death".