

PLEA FOR CHINA.

"I plead for China—fabled land,
Where temples thickly clustered stand,
Where prayers are said and vows are paid
To gods that human hands have made.

In vain the soulless temples rise—
They cannot pierce the arching skies ;
In vain humanity makes moan
To deaf, unseeing gods of stone."—*Sel.*

"SALT."

STEPHEN WATSON was a general favorite wherever he went, and had you known him you would have loved him, too. No one, to look at him, would have imagined he had a "besetting sin," which threatened to mar the beauty of his character. That is what every bad habit does, no matter how small and trifling it may be.

Stephen Watson wished to become a minister of the Gospel. His parents knew that his hasty temper was most unbecoming in one who one day hoped to be a servant of the meek and lowly Jesus, and did all in their power to convince him of the sin and folly of yielding to it. But Stephen wished to be considered brave and manly, and thought that, wise as King Solomon was, he had made a great mistake when he wrote those words, "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city."

Stephen was both clever and studious, and the time soon came when he must leave home to go to college. The last session at this village school passed only too rapidly.

Had it not been for his quick temper Stephen's parents would have felt no anxiety as to his leaving home, and happily for them a little circumstance occurred which greatly lessened their fears concerning him.

On the afternoon previous to his departure he went out to say a final good-bye to several of his companions, and when he returned home every one noticed how flurried and excited he looked. Observing a quick glance of inquiry upon his mother's face, he exclaimed,

"I'm afraid that unruly temper of mine will always be my master. On my way home I met Martin Saddler, who always annoys me by the provoking way he talks. I was determined not to be aggravated with him, but when we shook hands at parting, he said with a mischievous grin, 'I expect you'll be tamed before I see you again, old boy!' Up my temper flew as usual, while he stood laughing at having put me out."

"What a pity you didn't give him a good pinch of salt, it would have done you both good," said Uncle John. He was seated in an easy chair, reading the evening paper, but overheard all that Stephen said.

His remark came so unexpectedly, and seemed so out of place, that the young folks looked at each other in wonder, while Stephen himself exclaimed, "Whatever do you mean, Uncle John?" "Can't you guess?" he asked kindly, laying down his paper. "No, indeed I can't. I know that salt is invaluable, used for an innumerable variety of purposes, but what connection it has with Martin Saddler and myself is a puzzle I cannot solve," Stephen replied. "When you are a minister you will understand all about it, and meanwhile I'll try to explain my meaning. Don't you remember what rule St. Paul gives us regarding our speech? Perhaps not, so here it is: 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.'

"Now, had I been in your place when Martin Saddler uttered his ungracious remark, I would have taken it in good part and answered, 'I hope so; but don't you pity the tanners?' He would have been surprised and perhaps disappointed; but you yourself would have been much happier.

"To me the word 'salt' has a four-fold meaning," continued Uncle John, while all around were listening intently. "Each letter carries a tiny message in itself, and I'll tell you what each one says—

S "'Speak the truth in love.'

A "'A soft answer turneth away wrath

L "'Love thy neighbor as thyself.'

T "'The Lord God is my strength.'