

# Northern Messenger

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## The Martyrs of China.

When reading or listening to the story of the sufferings and death of the martyrs for Christ in the early years of the Church, we are tempted to think that the days of such things are altogether past.

It is true that such a fate no longer threatens us; nevertheless, even in these days followers of Christ are sometimes called upon to seal their faith with their blood, and their courage ranks with that of the early martyrs.

Who can but admire the exultant faith which must have filled the soul of Hsieh, a Christian of Peking, who insisted upon donning his best clothes as if for a festal occasion when he was led out to his martyrdom.

'I am to enter the palace of the King,' he said, 'and the best clothes I have should be used.' No wonder the Chinese dug out his heart to find the secret of his courage.

As the times grew dark, and dread uncertainties were hovering over the lives of the Christians, a Bible class of simple village women, in view of the possibilities of coming trial,

ter his ears were cut off still replied, 'I am a Christian.'

Then his hands were severed at the wrists, and he was given another opportunity to deny his Lord and yet save his life, but he again refused to recant, and was beaten to death and beheaded.

A young student received two thousand blows but would not recant. Even schoolboys and schoolgirls in several instances met death with a heroism which adds a peculiar lustre to this story of martyrdom.

Among the six Christian reformers of Foo-chow who were beheaded by the Empress Dowager there were three who expressed a desire to be baptized, yet 'humbly refrained because it would bring such ignominy on the Church. They did not know that their names would be an honor on the rolls of the Church, and that their example would be a lesson to the world.

Why does God allow martyrdom?

It is surely a supreme test. As such, if successfully endured, it is honoring to Christ, and takes its place among the evidences of the sincerity of faith and the loyalty of the soul's allegiance to the Gospel.

The fact that it is permitted and so often exacted is, moreover, a sign of Christ's confidence in the readiness of his faithful followers to suffer to the uttermost for his sake.

It is finally a heroic means of grace. It is a question whether the Church would have worthily survived if it had not had the discipline of martyrdom. If such faults have marked its career in spite of its fiery training, would it have held its own if it had never known the inspiration of the martyr spirit?

We may not be appointed to die for Christ, but we may live for him in the spirit of unselfish heroism, facing duty without flinching, and making our lives a living sacrifice to God and his service.

If the hallowed lessons of the hour help us to a higher level, enabling us to live and toil as those who would, if called upon, readily accept martyrdom, we too shall honor Christ, and learn profitable lessons from those faithful brethren and humble converts who, counting not their lives dear, have entered heaven in triumph.—'Cottager and Artisan.'

## A Revival Among the Karens

(The Rev. J. G. Mantle, in 'Out-and-Out.')

There are several distinct races in Burma, the principal of these being the Burmans, Karens, Peguans, and Shans.

The Karens chiefly inhabit villages in the jungles and mountains, and, notwithstanding the power and oppression of the Burmans, they have, for the most part, maintained their independence and lived apart as a separate people. They have been marvellously kept of God for the reception of the Gospel for many generations. Their traditions embody remembrances of the creation, the deluge, and the promise of a deliverer. They speak of God and his sovereignty, unity and eternity, his perfection and holiness.

You will readily see how these traditions are of the greatest possible advantage to the missionary who goes to preach to these people. In a great many languages there is no



A CHINESE BOOT-MAKER.

Many inspiring and touching incidents are to be found in the records of recent Chinese martyrdom.

The Chinese, as is well known, hold very firmly to their own opinions, in both religious and other matters, thinking their own methods far better than those of foreigners.

A Chinese workman carries on his trade in the same way as his ancestors did before him, and travellers have admired the painstaking patience with which they perform their tasks.

When a Chinaman has been led by the Holy Spirit into the truth, he holds his new faith as firmly as he did his former one, and no threats will make a truly converted man relapse into heathenism.

all rose one day in the class room 'to signify their willingness to die for Christ if he should put them 'to the test.'

One stout-hearted disciple, with the sword at his throat, replied to the test question, 'Yes, I am a Christian;' but as he escaped execution he was asked afterwards how he could witness so boldly when his life was threatened.

He replied, 'I have just been reading how Peter denied his Master, and afterwards went out and wept bitterly, and how could I deny my Lord?'

What more splendid example of fortitude than that Chinese Christian who declared himself a believer in the face of the mob, and af-