

## THE REMARKABLE CASE OF CAPTAIN JOHN.

## A TRUE TALE.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.

He was a river pirate. His father and father's father were river pirates before him. He never read his Bible, he could not read. He never went to church for the same reason that the fox kept clear of the trap. He might get caught. His hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him. He belonged to the "Jinks tribe." Everyone who knew that "tribe" would instantly exclaim, Enough said! A little hovel under the river bank, a dingy old boat, armed with axe and pike pole and possibly more questionable implements, were his possessions; the open river and any man's property, the field of his operations. He had a wife after his own heart, and children, well, they were in the Jinks line. Here Captain John lived—and laboured at river piracy until he was sixty. Every year he grew more weather-beaten, dark and tough, without and within. Ignorance, superstition, whiskey, tobacco, blasphemy, vices of all shapes and lines, had united their diabolic forces in begetting a man and moulding his life for sixty years.

One day I was called down from my study "to see a man." When I entered the room this is what I saw: A man whom I would have pronounced an Indian chief except for his iron gray hair and clothes. He looked from head to foot as if he had been hewn out of ancient, tawny wood with a broad axe, and left "in the rough." He fixed his small, keen, gray eyes upon me with the steady glare and fascination of a wild animal, and in just such a voice as must come from such a throat began:

"Be you the minister?"

"Yes, I am."

"Well, sumthin's happened to me, and I've come to tell ye."

"May I ask who you are?"

"Yis, ye kin. I'm Captain John. John Jinks. I belong down to the river. Sumthin' queer's happened to me. It was yisterday arternoon, and I haint slept since, and I haint et nothin' neither. An' I don't feel sleepy nor hungry neither. I feel so good. It seems as if eatin' and drinkin' 'ud spile it all till I telled it to some one, that is, to some one as knowed. You're the minister, haint ye?"

"Yes, Captain, what is it?"

"Waal, yisterday arternoon I went out to cut my ole woman some wood. I cut a spell, and then I began to feel kinder bad. I don't know what ailed me, but I felt bad. I said to myself, I haint sick, I et my dinner all right. I haint got no aiks nor pains. I sot down on a log and looked up and down the river. Tho't I rest a spell. But the longer I sot the worse I felt. Well, I said to myself, sumthin's the matter with ye, ole man. Ye haint never felt like this afore, as I reclect. I guess ye'd better go and lay down. So I went up in my chomber and laid down on the bed. I wasn't sleepy, and I didn't go to sleep neither. But whilst I lay there lookin' up at the rofters, if ye'll believe me, all at once they began to look shinny. I lay there starin' at 'em till they got as shinny as gold. Remember, I sort o' chuckled to myself, sayin' 'Well, ole man, ye never expected to have a chomber with gold rofters, did ye?' Then I sot up and looked around, and the hull room was just as shinny as the rofters. Everythin' in it was so bright it kinder dazzled me like. And the chomber looked bigger. Suddenly I didn't see 'em come, but all tu wunst there was some nice old men sittin' all around the room. They had white hair and long white bairds, and white clo'es. They was nice lookin' ole fellows, I tell ye; I never seed none like 'em like 'em nowhere. An' they all jest ris right up outen the floor and sot there, jest as I've seen the white mist rise up outen the river. They didn't say nothin' to me, nor I didn't say nothin' to them. We jest sot there and looked at each other. But they looked at me mighty kind and good. And they was all so clean and white and they looked so kinder soft and nice outen their eyes, that I began to feel ashamed. Seemed's if they were lookin' right into me and all through me; and none on 'em said a word till it seemed 's I'd hev to holter. Then, if ye'll believe it, all to once there cum flutterin' right down from

the gold rofters the pootiest leetle white dove ye ever saw. It seemed 's it its wings were all silver, they was so white, an' it hovered down and lit right in the middle of the shiny floor. (So lost was the old man in his vision that he imitated with his great, leathery, square hands the hovering of the dove, bending his body to the floor as if he still saw it). And when the ole men saw it, they all smiled, an' I smiled too, and when they seed me smilin' at the leetle dove, they smiled again more'n afore. Then all to once my eyes began to get kinder hazy, and when I looked up at the rofters, I seed they was turnin' back into wood again, an' the walls they kinder cumed together again, and putty soon there I was in my old chomber again, jest as twas afore. But I kin tell ye, minister, somehow or other the light off'n them rofters and clabboards has got right in here." He struck his chest a resounding blow that would have felled an ordinary man. "An' that leetle white dove seem's if I can jest feel it right in here a flutterin' them leetle shiny wings all covered with silver, and I tell ye, I never felt nothin' like it afore."

Here the old man's voice failed and the tears streamed down his seamed, weather-beaten face. "An' what's strange, minister, I don't want to go on the river no more; an' I can't swear no more; it scares me, for them nice ole men seem to be lookin' right into me. An' then I felt jest like prayin', but I'm kinder feared to that, 'cause I've done nothing but swear ever sence I can remember. An' I don't know what ye ought to say. So jest look up into the sky, an' say, 'O, Lord, don't let that shiny feelin' an' that leetle dove git outen my heart."

"My ole woman says I'm sick. But I haint sick; never felt so well in my life. I haint et nor slept any for nigh onto a day and night. But how kin ye eat and sleep when ye feel jest like shoutin' and singin' and runnin' and jumpin' all the time. Itell her if this is bein' sick, I wish I'd never been well, nor ever 'ud get well again. I want to be sick all the rest of my life if this is bein' sick. Now, minister, I've cum to ask ye what to do, for it seems's if sumthin' oughter to be done; an' sumthin' kept a sayin' inside here, 'Go'n see that minister, an' he'll tell ye what to do.'"

The old man paused and turned to me, with the simple, eager expectation of a child. Me heart sank within me, for it flashed upon me that here is a mind utterly vacant of Biblical and Church lore. There was no starting point. So putting up a little prayer for help, I went to the old man with outstretched hands, putting one in his hand and one on his shoulder, for I felt strangely drawn to him, and said, "Captain John, my dear brother, the Lord has been with you. For your life, don't you do or say, or think anything to darken that light in your heart or to soil the wings of that little dove. Now let us get down on our knees here and pray." We poured out our hearts in thanksgiving and prayer. I knew he was praying with me by the deep sighs and groans and hearty "Yes, yes."

The rest of Captain John's story is soon told. From that time on he was a new being. He soon found reputable work. Blasphemy and vulgarity passed as by magic from his speech. He was a constant and most devout worshipper at church and prayer-meeting. Often when I came down from the pulpit, Captain John would be waiting for me, his face aglow; he would seized my hands in a vice-like grip, saying, "Ye got it right, minister, ye got it right, this mornin'; I knowed it, I knowed it; glory be to His name."

We never failed of a good prayer-meeting when Captain John was present. A few fresh and startling words from him would instantly dissipate the air of unreality which too often broods over such assemblies, and bring us to a consciousness of His presence, who speaks to His children heart to heart. If we were in a leaden mood, the brethren solemnly and prefectorily "occupying the time," a deep groan from Captain John, or a suppressed Hallelujah, would startle us from our drowsiness like a call from heaven. A sense of shame would steal upon us, that we could be so slow and dull of heart when there was one in our midst filled with glory and triumph.

So he lived in the joy of the Lord, growing in grace and favour with God and man. That first light caught from the "gold rofters and clabboards" of his poor little garret, never seemed to fade. The white dove in his heart had never taken its flight. Captain John died in the vision and victory of that light which came down out of God from heaven, and fell in transfiguration upon the poor little pirate hut under the river bank.—Evangelist.

## THE ANTI-FOREIGN RIOTS IN CHINA.

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because of the abominable nature of the stuff. I have in my hands a collection of coloured cartoons, which were republished for the especial enlightenment of the foreign Powers, with a translation conveying some idea (but by no means an exhaustive one) of their grossness. The production is extraordinary in more respects than one. Modern Buddhism, in the person of a priest, contributed the pictures, too vile to display before you; and Confucianism, in the person of a notorious Hunan official called Chou Han, contributed the descriptive text on the margins, likewise too vile to read before you, even through a softened translation. Observe, now, on the very cover the evidence of official duplicity. When the engravings were at work reproducing this volume, a curious practical difficulty arose. Here on the cover are depicted five or six dragons. But the dragon is the national emblem of China; and these have each five claws. The difficulty was this: the native workmen were found unwilling to reproduce the cover, as a five clawed dragon is recognized by any intelligent native as the mark of imperial sanction for a publication, and they were afraid they might become liable to punishment if found guilty of engraving them without express official orders. See then the cunning duplicity of this filthy publication. And it is by no means the only defamatory literature which circulates under official sanction. There is for instance, an important series of historical documents issued by the Government bookshops, which for convenience have been called the Blue Books of China, and they are full of grotesque and hideous representations of foreign infamy and outspoken incitement to violence. Especially from the Province of Hunan, there has for some time been flowing a steady stream of impure literature breathing bitter detestation not only for the heralds of the Cross, but for foreigners at large; and the government has never seriously attempted to stop this evil at its source. Everywhere these documents are effectually used in preparing the way for riot. After an experience which has extended over thirty-five years, Dr. Griffith John, the veteran missionary at Hankow, expresses it as his deliberate opinion that "if the scholars and gentry would only let us alone, we should have no difficulty whatever with the people."

And yet it would be unfair to leave the matter here. The admission must be made, however reluctantly, that over and above the conditions just indicated there are certain injudicious missionary methods in vogue in China which cannot but be held responsible for the frequent recurrence of trouble—responsible at least to the extent of affording a too ready handle for stirring up the passions of the common people. That this stirring up is undoubtedly, and almost without exception, done by the gentry and literati—who belong to the official classes—is recognized by all; but at the same time, opportunities for playing upon the vulgar suspicions of the people have in certain quarters been too readily afforded by the missionaries themselves. I refer, of course especially to the operations carried on by the Roman Catholic Church. In the progress of the narrative, you must have been struck with the prominence given throughout the rioting to mistrust in connection with the work carried on in Catholic Orphanages. These institutions, in themselves part of a noble benevolent enterprise, are hardly adapted for Chinese soil at the present stage of foreign intercourse. Among the Chinese themselves, it is a not uncommon practice to kidnap children for the purpose of using various parts of their bodies in the concoction of certain remedies recommended in the native work of Materia Medica; hence the persistent belief in all these stories attributing to foreigners the same practice of scooping our hearts and eyes. The people see large numbers of children conveyed to the Roman Catholic Orphanages, and in their national inability to understand any disinterested work of charity their indignation is easily inflamed by the persistent suggestions of the gentry that the mission enclosures are in actuality only so many factories for making eye and heart medicine. One would think that the Church of Rome had long ago learned the inadvisability of this otherwise advantageous method of training followers from infancy; for in 1870 the massacre of nuns and other foreigners which occurred at Tientsin was occasioned by this very method.

But here again, it is only fair to the Roman Catholics to recognize the strong probability that were they to vacate the field to-morrow, Protestants would

be sure to encounter difficulties of their own. It may be taken for granted that we, too, are not always possessed of consummate wisdom and that instances of imprudence can be cited against us; we do not indeed lay claim to anything like the infallibility of the average globe-trotter and scribbler for the press. But I am prepared to go still farther. Even those who in the prosecution of secular pursuits, fondly imagine that missionaries of all stripes are the sole cause of the misunderstandings which so frequently endanger life, need to be reminded of the historical fact that outbreaks occurred against foreigners before the missionary appeared on the field, as well as of a further consideration with the mention of which I shall close.

While it would not be the part of an intelligent observer to dismiss all the rioting in China with a wave of the hand as due to pure and simple savagery, there would be at least a certain amount of justification for such an attitude—this, namely, that all these outbreaks are so many deliberate exhibitions of the natural enmity of the human heart against God. It is quite pertinent to raise the Psalmist's query, "Why do the nations rage and the peoples imagine a vain thing?" There can be little doubt about it: the kings of the earth herein set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, though often unconsciously against the Lord and against His Anointed. We need not try to minimize it: the revolt in the long run is nothing less than that. Nor, under the discovery, need our spirits quail. It means simply that we must bestir ourselves and put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for our wrestling over there in China is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities and powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Not only in pagan lands, but all over Christendom, the times are portentous with mighty social and religious upheavals, and problems calling for solution by the most devoted consideration and choicest efforts of the Church of God; and in facing them all, it is idle to sweep out of sight the stern unrelenting fact of original and actual sin. A Bellamy may contrive another Utopia, but sinful nature in Chicago finds it impossible to carry it out. We may lay our fingers on any number of mediate causes of this rioting in China, but when it comes to the sum total they are all embraced in the one fearful fact of political and moral corruption. The very rulers of China, pluming themselves on a falsely estimated intellectual superiority, have over and over again illustrated by their conduct the utter insufficiency of Confucianism, lofty as its teachings are, to regenerate sinful human nature; and indeed, growing ever more and more jealous of the undoubted evidence that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, they hasten to play upon the passions of those whose baser natures are unrestrained by even such education as Confucianism can afford; and the whole country as a consequence is in a blaze. There is, therefore, a sense in which we would not dare to shift the responsibility for all these troubles from Christianity itself for in one important aspect they exhibit unmistakable symptoms of alarm at the true progress of the only Power which can renovate China and the Chinese. "I cannot better conclude than in the words of Dr. Griffith John upon this very point: 'The main aim of the missionary in coming to China,' he says, 'is not to teach a system of ethics, but to preach Christ, the one true Saviour of men. The great need of China to-day is just vital religion. The Chinese need a heavenly principle that shall infuse a new moral and spiritual life into the nation, a mighty power that shall transform them in their inmost being, a divine inspiration that shall create within their breasts aspirations after holiness and immortality.' In other words, what they need is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Apart from Christianity, I can see no hope for China. There is no power in the religious systems of the country to develop a holy character, a true manhood. China cannot advance in the path of true progress without a complete change in the religious life of the nation; it is Christ alone who can lead in the glorious dawn of the Chinese renaissance; the new birth of a mighty nation to liberty and righteousness, and ever expanding civilization. Feeling this to be true in our heart of hearts, we, the missionaries, have come to China to preach Christ unto them that are called, whether the one or the other, Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

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Honan.