

"I am always happy, little master," he said, "for in my heart I have a great gift."

"Dear Lipu," returned the child, "do tell me what your secret is. I have seen the other men point at you and chatter together, and I have been afraid that my father was going to send you away. "You have been here a shorter time than any of them, yet I like you best of all."

"Little master," replied Lipu, "I am happy because I am a Christian; not a Christian like the lady your mother, but a Christian of Christ."

By this Lipu meant that he was a Catholic. He had answered the question put to him and volunteered no more information. But the boy was not satisfied.

"Tell me more," he cried. "Tell me how being a Christian of Christ makes you happy. Would it make me happy, do you think?" he added longingly.

Hubert had been born in China, and although his parents were comfortably off, he had never been to England. His father's business kept him always in Hong Kong, and going home was talked of as a pleasure to come, when years of money making justified such an expenditure. There had once been a question of sending Hubert back, in the hope that some treatment in a London hospital would cure, or even relieve him; but the doctors in the naval hospital at Hong-Kong and the newcomers who came with the fleet, agreed that nothing could be done to prolong the boy's life. He could not live to manhood, and they advised his parents to keep him with them, and to make his short life happy.

So Hubert had lived for nearly ten years in this far-off Chinese town, kindly treated and well cared for. He was taught to read by his mother, but neither she nor his father had ever spoken to him about religion. Mrs. Hurst was nominally a Protestant. Her husband had once been a Catholic, but a life spent hundreds of miles from any priest who could have understood him, had he gone to confession, had led on his part also to complete indifference. The boy had been christened by a Presbyterian missionary, who had happened to pass through the town when he was about two years old; but until Lipu began to speak to him of Catholic belief, he had been absolutely ignorant of anything spiritual, except that there was a Supreme Being in heaven.