

THE CRUELITIES OF HEATHENISM  
AND MISSIONARY SUCCESS.

Dr. J. A. Grey a Medical missionary of the Presbyterian church in Ireland, writes as follows from Northern Manchuria, North China.

"Unfortunately, on entering the city of Kirin the charm is rudely broken, for the streets are very filthy, and the smells arising from decaying refuse of all kinds is most objectionable. The Government returns lately stated the population to be 150,000, and as we passed through the gateways how my heart longed that by God's strength we might proclaim this great city as taken possession of for King Jesus, and that soon He might be her crowned by many Lord of all. At present we do not know of one of the teeming thousands who is called by the ever holy name of Christian.

The evening we arrived we had great difficulty in getting an inn, so we judged that there must be some considerable opposition on the part probably of the official classes. After about three hours' searching, however, we secured a room—smoky, dirty, draughty to be sure, but we were right glad to get any resting place to lay our weary heads. The evangelist who had been sent to Kirin two months before us to try and rent a house came and reported to us his utter failure to do so, and that during his negotiations a man had been imprisoned for rendering him assistance.

These things being so, clearly our first duty was to allay the suspicious of the people by quiet deeds of kindness whilst living for a time in their midst. Accordingly, we settled down in our dirty little room, opened the medicine chest, and in a quiet way intimated to the innkeeper that if any of her friends were sick we would attend them and give them medicine. We thought it better not to make any public announcement.

The day after we arrived, when sitting in our room waiting for our way to open up, we were startled by dreadful screams coming from the other side of the yard of the inn. We made inquiries, and found that a native doctor and sorcerer was treating the daughter-in-law of the innkeeper for being "possessed of a devil," and that he had succeeded in getting the evil spirit up into her arms and would soon get out. We refrained from interfering for a short time, but as the screaming continued and betokened great suffering, we then went across to see if we could not render assistance.

The sight which met our eyes was ghastly. In a small room, crowded with men and women, the sorcerer was carrying on his diabolical work. His patient—a poor woman

of 30 years of age—was held down by a number of strong men upon the king, or bed, and was simply writhing in agony. Two large needles were sticking through her upper lip and others were being forced up under her finger nails. Some of the largest veins in the forearm had just been opened, and the dark venous blood was pouring out. The ignorant and superstitious people, pointing to the blood, cried "Look at its colour, it is well to let it out." The colour was really that of healthy venous blood. It was in vain that we protested against this inhuman cruelty. Warnings and pleadings were alike fruitless, and the exorcist proceeded, looking a little angry, however, at our expostulations. Incense sticks were shortly produced and burned before him, whilst he muttered some prayers, and went through a series of fanatical gesticulations, such as gulping down the devil and slapping himself on his forehead, &c. After he left, the story we got from the mother-in-law of the patient seemed to indicate that the subject of these tortures was suffering from some infectious fever, and had for some nights been delirious. This the poor people thought was "possession by a devil."

Next morning, to our horror, we learned that the woman had died during the night. About ten o'clock in the forenoon she was buried. We got a glimpse of the proceedings from our window. First of all the corpse was carried out on a litter covered with blankets, followed by a man dressed in white cloths (the mourning colour), scattering ashes over the path. Then came a paper effigy of the woman—life size—and a paper ox, to be burned at the grave, it being supposed that these attend to the disembodied spirit in the other world. During all this time a deafening noise, caused by the bursting of powder crackers and blowing of horns, somewhat like the bagpipes, was kept up. Lastly, a herd of swine were fiercely driven to and fro in the courtyard, there being some superstition connected with the proceeding which we could not ascertain, but which brought to our recollection the "herd of swine" possessed by devils mentioned in Scripture. Oh, dear fellow-Christians, I had often read missionary stories before leaving home telling of the cruelties of heathendom, but how different it is when one is brought face to face with such dreadful deeds and is powerless to stop them! Our only hope is in God and in your prayers on our behalf. Do pray much for the overthrow of Satan's strongholds of sorcery, witchcraft, and idolatry, and the setting up of the banner of Jehovah. Kirin is a city wholly given to idolatry, and no might nor power of ours can change it. No! but,