

ment as a rural letter-carrier in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. He was subsequently employed by the National Bible Society of Scotland as colporteur, and at this time his remarkable facility for languages attracted the notice of some of the directors. It was accordingly arranged that he should attend some classes at the college, though his studies were not allowed to interfere with his regular work. All day long, therefore, he travelled with his Bible waggon, went to bed at nine p.m., rose at three a.m. (only think of the physical misery involved in turning out regularly at such an hour!), studied till it was time for his classes at eight and nine a.m., and then began again at a new day's work of colportage.

Thus he worked steadily through two long dreary winters in Glasgow, a good preparation for the bitter cold of winter in Northern China, whither he was sent in 1871—and where, of course, his first work was the herculean task of thoroughly mastering the language, which can only be really accomplished on the spot.

During the long hours he daily spent in the crowded streets, he was filled with compassion for the terribly numerous blind beggars, who wander about utterly uncared for, and the thought occurred to him that some method might be devised for teaching them to read. Of course no amount of embossing could make the frightfully complicated Chinese character comprehensible to the most sensitive fingers, but something simpler might be devised.

Never was there a better proof of the advantage of acquiring any sort of useful knowledge, even when there seems no present reason for doing so.

Shortly before leaving England in 1871, Mr. Murray happened to have an opportunity of learning something of Professor Bell's system of visible speech, in which he accordingly took some lessons, as also in Braille's system of reading and writing for the blind, by means of embossed dots.

On arriving in China he found that the former actually facilitated his own study of the excruciating language, and as he noted down the value of every sound he mastered, he seems to have gradually reduced much of his own knowledge into this extraordinary simple (and yet to me quite incomprehensible) form. With patient ingenuity he then contrived so to combine the two systems that there seemed every reason to hope that blind Chinamen might actually be taught to read and write. It is simply marvellous to see with what apparent simplicity the system lends itself to the rendering of Chinese sound, and to replacing the bewildering multitude of Chinese characters; but it is still more amazing to me to see how quickly and easily these poor creatures seem to master the subject.

Looking round for a suitable subject to begin with, Mr. Murray selected a poor little orphan beggar, who was lying almost naked in the streets, without any relations to take care of him. He was attracted by the boy's cheerful contentment in his loneliness and poverty, and by the fact that he was free from the taint of leprosy, which is terribly common among the miserable beggar population. So he took him in hand, washed and clothed him, and undertook to provide food and lodging, on the condition that he would apply himself to mastering this new learning. Considering the honour which in China attaches to all literary pursuits, the boy was delighted, as well he might be. But only conceive his ecstasy and the thankful satisfaction of his teacher, when, *within six weeks*, he was able not only to read fluently, but to write with remarkable accuracy! When you consider that a man with the full use of all his faculties takes years of hard study to acquire the same powers with the use of ordinary Chinese character, you will scarcely wonder that those who knew this wretched blind beggar-boy two months previously deemed the result to be simply miraculous.

To complete the experiment two blind beggar-men were also induced to try to learn. They have also to be supported on an allowance of 15s. a month, to enable them to give up their former profession and betake them to that of letters. Though not so exceptionally bright as the boy Sheng, the two men