

A TRIP TO HONAN, II.

By REV. J. MACGILLIVRAY.

WELL, my young fellow-travellers, how have you fared since we parted company? I trust you were not mobbed by the Chinese as our missionaries were twice over. No; well, I am glad to hear it. You are ready then for another trip right into Honan, for you remember I left you just as we reached its boundary.

But, let us first have a little chat about this province of Honan. It has about fifteen millions of people. It is so fertile that it bears the name "the garden of China." Coal mines are worked in old fashioned ways and the coal is carried in bags on the backs of donkeys to the river boats.

Honan means South River (Ho, River, and nan, South), because the bigger part of it is south of the Yellow river. This is the river that now and again bursts its banks, and flooding the country, sweeps away farmhouses, villages, towns and even cities. You may remember the terrible flood of 1887, which drowned thousands of natives and left thousands with nothing to live on.

But, you see, the part of Honan our missionaries are working in—a kind of three-cornered part, is Northern Honan, having about five millions of people, as many as all Canada. That's a big congregation for seven ministers. Isn't it? When some of you grow up and become ministers you'll know where to go—to Honan, where there is lots of room to work. The people live very near to one another, for they average two hundred and thirty to a square mile, while in Quebec province the average is only six to a square mile. It is said that on a clear day from the top of one temple (pagoda) one can count 200 villages round about. As a rule there is a village every mile.

But let us begin our trip and go straight to Chü Wang where one band of our missionaries lives. We go by boat down the Wei River till we reach a point opposite the town. Years ago it was a brisk, business place, now its trade is gone, and its buildings are tumble-down and weather-beaten. We make our

way to the Canada Presbyterian Mission House. My! what a welcome we get from our missionaries! Don't you know them yet! Well, here are Jonathan Goforth, Mrs. Goforth and little Paul, Dr. McClure and Mrs. McClure, and Donald MacGillivray and Mrs. — No, he is the single man of the mission. Ay! but don't they ask lots of questions about their dear friends in Canada. As you see the low rooms they live in, and the people about them, you will not wonder that at times they grow lonely and long for news from home. But we have many questions to ask them too, especially about how two of them were mobbed a year ago in this very house, and all they had was carried away, and they had to live for weeks behind closed gates.

But, by and by, we go out for a stroll in the town. What narrow streets. The sidewalks and roadway are in one, so that as you walk along, you may bump into a cart or wheelbarrow load of cotton or against a donkey, or tramp on some mangy little cur, the streets being full of them.

Then, look at the shops, how curious, with their counters facing the open street. There, you see is a man with his donkey at the counter buying himself a pair of boots. But what flaming sign-boards? Look here! "Heavenly Origin Hall," "Virtuous Prosperity Hall," and the colored motto: "We regard righteousness as gain," "Beware of Impositors," "One Price," etc., and then the hideous pictures they try to paint on their shop fronts to tell you what articles are sold within. Now, I know, you are wondering why these poles are stretched across the streets from roof to roof. Well, matting is spread out on them in the hot season to keep the heat from beating down on the streets below.

But what a noise is ever going on! the barking of dogs, the braying of asses, the curses of drivers, the shouts of sellers. You see most of the business is done in the streets. Even the barber you will meet with a pole over his shoulder, from which is depended his razor, scissors, hot water, and even a stool for you to sit upon as he fixes you up right on the street.