

UNCERTAINTY in HONAN.

Rev. T. C. Hood, of our Honan Mission, writes to Rev. Dr. MacKay, Toronto, from Chefoo, China, under date May 17th, 1901, as follows:

Our messenger arrived here from Honan last Saturday afternoon having come via Tientsin. Having found that Dr. McClure had gone to Formosa, and that Mr. Slimmon was with the troops in Peking, he came on down here.

He reports that the road out was perfectly peaceful. He came by house-boat to Tientsin, and found travelling on the river quite safe. This is mainly due to the fact that the French have guards stationed along the river as far as Lin Ching to protect the salt boats which they have been sending into the interior.

The messenger reports that everything was peaceful in Honan. The Christians were meeting together regularly for worship in little bands in the different towns and cities. The officials had issued some proclamations favorable to the Christians. The two or three Christians who were reported as having recanted, were meeting with the others to worship. One of them Wang I, who was robbed of a good deal of his property, has given 30,000 cash, to help some of the poorer Christians through the stress of the famine. The Christians took up a collection among themselves and sent one of our helpers, Wang Mei, from place to place to conduct classes for the study of the Bible. These classes would last for several days in each place. This helper writes us, telling how full of gratitude his heart is for the way the Lord helped him in this work.

You will have seen by the last 'Refugee' that we had hoped from the report of our messenger last time that the stress of the famine was past, but this time we are sorry to report another calamity which has again left the people with no hope of a harvest. A very strong wind, which the Chinese describe as a 'black, yellow, red wind' blew for three days, taking the soil away from the roots of the wheat, and then freezing it dead, so that it is all lost. So great is the stress that in some places a regular business is now made of selling wives and daughters, the price paid per head, ranging from 5,000 to 15,000 cash.

That terrific wind blew the iron roof all of Dr. Menzies' new house, carrying pieces of it to the city wall about one-eighth of a mile away. It also blew half the roof off the new Chapel. It seems to have been a terrific wind. It was so dark that the people could not see even in the day time without lamps in their houses.

The messenger says the soldiers are all out of our Compound now, and that the officials have taken the head carpenter and the head mason, and set them to work repairing Dr. Menzies' house and the Chapel, and making them clean up all the buildings and repair them. The officials told these workmen that since they built the houses in the first instance, they knew how they ought to be, and were to make them as they were when we left. If anything was wrong when the foreigners returned, the fault would rest on the workmen's shoulders. The officials are using their own money to pay the workmen and have placed the Wei Yuan who escorted us as far as Wei Hwei Fu last summer, in the yard to oversee the work. Before the soldiers left they filled the trenches inside and outside the wall of the Compound and leveled the ground

up and repaired the wall. So according to this messenger's report, there seemed to be a general preparing for our return, and from the Christians' letters too, we judged that they rather hoped we would soon be back.

However we were not long to rejoice in the encouragement which this brought us, for yesterday noon we received letters from Honan which Ho I, one of our helpers had brought to Tientsin, and these changed the aspect of affairs entirely. Shortly after our regular messenger left over 100,000 Chinese soldiers arrived from the South. This was about May 1st, and that night posters were put up through all the different towns and villages, saying that there was to be a general rising on May 3rd, i. e. the 15th of the 3rd Chinese Moon. Strange to say this was the very date we had heard was set for the wiping out of the foreigners' in Szu Chuan Province, but we hear lots of rumors such as that, and so don't take them very seriously. Well one of our helpers saw thirty cart loads of arms and ammunition enter Chang te Fu o. e. d. y, and then thirty cart loads of tents &c., enter next day, and the whole city was in a state of uproar and terror. Two of our helpers, fearing that the good report of peace in their former letters, might have induced us to start for Honan, at once wrote letters to us and dispatched this third helper, Ho I, in all haste to Tientsin to prevent our running into danger. We do not know what it all means. We have sent for Ho I to come down here from Tientsin, but he will not be able to tell us how things turned out as he left May 1st. The posters put up stated that a certain official was to be killed, but further particulars were not given.

We have heard that the Emperor had some thought of spending the summer in Honan, and we are hoping that these troops are simply preparing for his arrival, though we cannot say. The poor Christians are certainly terrified anyway. It has certainly meant a great deal to be a Native Christian in China during the past few months. It is a marvellous testimony to the power of the Gospel, that so many who are but babes in the faith have stood firm amidst all the fires of persecution.

May the Lord preserve the Church in China, and not suffer it to be further tried at this time.

Early in the year the New York Evangelist proposed to hold religious services at the Buffalo Exposition, and indeed became responsible for the expense incurred. The best speakers of all denominations were engaged, a substantial tent was erected, and services have been held for some weeks now. They have already become one of the features of the Pan-American Exposition and will, certainly become even more popular as the season advances.

What Society needs is that men who are called by the name of Christ should bring practical godliness down into business, and that they should make their business a testimony for God and righteousness, "by manifestation of the truth commending themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Elders and the Lord's Supper.

At the last meeting of the North London Presbytery, says the English Presbyterian, a discussion took place on the Synod's remit on elders presiding at the Lord's Supper. The debate was characterized by a warmth of brotherly feeling, and a full and frank statement of views and objections. The Rev. P. Carmichael moved, as the Presbytery's recommendation to be reported to the Synod's Committee, "That the prayer of the overture be granted with such safeguards as the Synod in its wisdom may suggest." Mr. Carmichael urged the general principle—elders may take part in the highest spiritual functions of the church, such as assisting in the ordination of elders and even of ministers; why may they not preside at the celebration of the Lord's Supper? Mr. Robert Wales seconded, and in the course of his speech asked, supposing the Regent Square congregation found one day that for some unforeseen reason their minister was unable to preside at the celebration of the Supper for which they were already met, whether the Session would not appoint one of their number to preside and conduct the service. Mr. Robert White moved as an amendment that the report of the Presbytery be, "That it is not, in the judgment of this Presbytery, in the interests of the Church, that the prayer of this overture be granted." Mr. Whyte wished to know for whose benefit this change was proposed? They were not arguing the abstract question, "May an elder be allowed to dispense the Sacrament?" His answer to the abstract question would be "Yea," but he saw great objections on the ground of expediency. Mr. Whyte proceeded to set out these objections in a speech of great earnestness. He confessed to having preached and conducted the services at ordinary diets of worship; but he would rather preach ten sermons than lead the devotions of the congregation once, and he would decline most decidedly to preside at the Communion service. Rev. C. Anderson Scott said they did not base their objections on a matter of principle, but they joined issue wholly on the question of expediency. They felt that the best man would not be willing to do the work, and that others, not the most suitable, perhaps, would rather like to take the duty. Let them not forget the sound Presbyterian notion that the Session administers the Sacrament, the minister merely presiding as permanent president. On a vote being taken, after full discussion, Mr. Whyte's amendment was carried by a large majority, and became the finding of the Presbytery.

It is one of the beauties of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ that, as it enters, so it enlarges the heart and spirit; as it blesses so it increases the need of blessing; as it enlightens, and thus reveals the natural darkness, and sin, and ignorance, so it blots out the guilt and shows us its power for cleansing and subduing; so that we never arrive at any standstill; but what, according to our natural reason, would be a culminating point and a closed door is, where Christ reigns, only a mist before our eyes, which his hand removes as we draw near, and we find that what we fancied was a height is but the threshold of some new, untrodden ground, some fresh and lovely glimpse of the abundance of life which is ever in store.—Selected.