

Still it is possible even for a great man sometimes to make a very foolish remark, and thereby do grave injustice unconsciously to those whose whole-hearted consecration deserves our real admiration, and, at the same time, do injury to the cause that is dearest of all to the heart of Him who loves humanity with infinite tenderness. Therefore, such issues as these being involved, we still hesitate to accept the statement to which we have called attention.

A HEARER.

DIVINE DELIVERANCE AT WU-SHIH-PING.

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Wu-shih-ping is a pretty little village nestling among the foothills of a mountain range which runs through Central Chehkiang, one of the seacoast provinces of China. Fine woods of pine, cedar, oak and chestnut cover the hamlet from distant view, while beyond the trees there stretches miles of plain, carved into queerly shaped rice fields, green with the growing harvest. To the westward a wide blue lake irrigates the plain, and beyond high mountain peaks, range after range—a beautiful and peaceful scene. As the village was about equally divided between heathen and Christian, it was far from being as peaceful as it looked. The lights and shadows in the adjoining pine woods were not more changing than the joyful and sad experience of the Christians.

The offence of the cross has not ceased in China. The villagers fiercely resented the intrusion of the new doctrine, connected wrongly enough with opium, war, rebellion and the hateful foreigner. Persecution set in, mild enough compared with history, but sufficiently trying to people young in the faith. As injuries were forgiven and no revengeful spirit shown, persecution grew bolder and fiercer. The spirit of meekness was again mistaken for weakness. The younger Christians began to chafe under the restraint.

"Why should they submit to have the water drained off from their rice-fields and the crop lost? Why should a straying animal be immediately slain, or, worse still, hopelessly maimed? Why refused the use of public roads, the public wells, the firewood from the hills? Why beaten and reviled on the market-places? We do not fear them. Let us defend ourselves!"

Calmer counsels prevailed. They waited for God to defend them. He strengthened their faith, and mightily encouraged them by leading one and another of their persecutors to accept Christ.

Three miles from Wu-shih-ping there is a small town called Stone Gates, where a market is held for the surrounding hamlets. Here the brethren found a mission field and often preached Christ, sold books and tried to lead men into the truth. It was a very unpromising place, being full of opium dens, and the attendant gamblers, bad women, loafers, thieves and the like sinful debris of human life. All attempts at buying or renting a building for a mission station at Stone Gates had failed, owing to the strong opposition not only of the "opium interest," but of the gentry and people generally. Finding petty persecution of no avail, and that the Christians grew stronger on their daily diet of abuse and injury, the idolaters met at Stone Gates in an

opium den, and decided upon a bold stroke which should rid them of this religious nuisance for once and all.

In China few affairs of importance can be undertaken without the assistance of a fortune-teller, who selects a "lucky day." It does not occur to these people that he cannot select days to be born in or lucky days to die in. On being consulted by the conspirators Mr. Fortune-teller fixed a date ten days ahead for this important event—the extermination of the Wu-shih-ping Christians. If undertaken on any other day, the project would fail. Night time was the best part of the twenty-four hours for the purpose. Mr. Fortune-teller quietly received his fee and slipped over to Wu-shih-ping to tell the Christians what was planned, in hope of getting a second one.

It was with much concern the Christians heard that their homes were to be burned, their cattle stolen, themselves driven from the district on pain of death. Where all were foes they found no friends to plead for them. All poor men, they could not bribe officials to give protection which was theirs by right. Being disciples of Christ, they would not consent to use methods diplomatic and crafty, to overthrow the designs of their enemies. So they came and consulted the missionary and asked his counsel, which was: "Put God to the test; trust and obey him. Satan cannot reach those whom God hides. He is able to save unto the uttermost."

We felt it our duty to call on the Governor of Kinwha and inform him of the projected riot, not only as claiming the rights of peaceful people, but also as showing the natives that the Christians held the magistrate's office in respect. Moreover, if anything came of the riot, he could not be held responsible, if he knew nothing of the matter.

He received us in great state, in a gaily furnished room—foreign clocks ticking merrily on the walls, porcelain pots filled with dwarfed and flowering shrubs and listened with politeness to our story, with many noddings of the head, and smiles, which suggested mirth rather than friendship. Wagging his shaven head to and fro, he explained that these were good people, who always paid their taxes, and he could not believe they would be guilty of lawless conduct. He had no right to think evil of them. Anyway he could not prevent crime, but if committed, we might rest assured he would punish it. He refused to issue a proclamation protecting the Christians. His idea evidently was, that if a riot came off he would have some good pickings out of the families concerned, as some were well connected.

While we in the city were vainly seeking the protection the law was supposed to afford, the little assemblies of believers scattered over the country were daily praying for their persecuted brethren. The appeal to Jehovah was more effectual than the cry to the temporal power.

The time came for the attack. Messengers had been sent along the route from Stone Gates to Wu-shih-ping. The men from the farm and hamlets were to join the main party as it came. They made the night hideous with their gongs. The glare of torches revealed the half-naked forms of men—pig-tails tightly bound round their heads in "fighting-trim." Armed with swords and tridents, knives and spears, they were expecting the Christians to make a bold stand at last, for the defence of their families and poor homes.

Coming to the first house they found it empty, the inmates gone! Soon they found all the brethren gathered in the strongest house, with the door shut for fear of