

LETTER FROM REV. J. A. McVICAR.

ASSAULTS UPON OUR MISSIONARIES.

HSIN CHEN, OCT. 31, 1891.

MY DEAR MR. CASSELS:—So much attention has of late been attracted to the Province of Honan in connection with the series of alarming outbreaks in the Yangtze Valley, that the deep-rooted enmity against foreigners in our own province has been almost overlooked. For some time it has been known that the poisonous literature from the South has been freely circulating here, and in the nature of things outbreaks were only to be expected. The church will not have forgotten the looting at Ch'n-Wang a year ago, and now we are sorry to inform you of an outbreak at our new station in Hsin Chen.

On Thursday afternoon, Oct 29, an organized attempt was made to levy blackmail and drive us out, and repeated attacks with knives were made upon our persons, although not resulting in injury. A band of professional beggars was employed, who burst open the outer and inner gates of the compound, whereupon crowds from the streets came in until the compound was filled. One of the beggars threw himself down to be trampled upon and lay for the rest of the afternoon feigning death. The others, after an interval, rushed riotously forward with blood streaming down their faces, after the approved fashion of Chinese beggars. In effecting their entrance they also took pains to smear the doorposts with their own blood, another device for exciting sympathy commonly adopted by this thoroughly organized and recognized class of mendicants. A demand was made for two hundred tias of cash (about \$80), and this demand, enforced by three distinct assaults upon us, in all of which knives were freely brandished but never used. The crowds from the streets filled all the houses and courts in the compound, stamping noisily on the wooden floors by way of calling marked attention to the fact that they were hollow, and therefore, in the popular imagination, sure receptacles for the eyes and hearts of Chinese children.

The Viceroy's proclamation, which had been obtained through the British Consul at Tientsin, was hanging in a conspicuous place in the inner gate, and we were even dragged in front of it and a show of violence offered us there.

The mob continued in possession of the compound for three hours, during which time we had indubitable evidence and were directly informed that the outbreak was due to the circulation of scandalous rumors now current throughout the Empire, especially that of taking out children's eyes to make medicine. At sunset, peace talkers demanded all the money in our possession. This happened to be a

small amount, about twenty ounces of silver and eleven-tias of cash, in all less than half the amount they demanded. Before the money was handed over, Dr. Smith and Mr MacDougall unexpectedly arrived. Care was taken to secure the names of the peace-talkers in writing, with a view to incriminating them, and this, together with a request that they should withdraw while we engaged in prayer, brought manifest dismay, as an hour later the silver was returned. One of our helpers overheard on the street that this was due to fright. On Friday morning the beggars again forced their way in by a rear gate of the compound, claiming that the man who had been trampled upon the day before was dead. They demanded satisfaction, but we disclaimed all responsibility, and succeeded in getting them quietly out. Mr. MacGillivray has gone to Hsun Hsien to claim protection in terms of the Imperial Edict recently issued, whilst the rest of us are keeping quiet behind barricaded gates.

Further details I cannot find time to furnish at this writing. We, of course, consider the situation here as grave in the extreme, as it is in fact said to be throughout the Empire at this juncture; but we have constant evidences of the power of prayer and the reality of our master's presence. In a letter from my father, received on the night of the outbreak, but written in the middle of August, occur words which I cannot refrain from quoting, so strangely did they find fulfilment. Referring to a recent family bereavement, he said:—"Our life is but a vapor that appeareth for a little and then vanisheth away. We are bound for the tomb, or rather for the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the tomb is but a way-side inn where we rest a little on our pilgrimage home. Let us fill up the days of our journey in glorifying the King of our Celestial Country. Let us never forget that we are citizens of another land, and that while it is the custom of this country to take tribute of strangers, our treasure is in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves cannot break in and steal. One of your compounds has been looted, and the same may happen to others, but your treasure above is where no thief can enter." Further on speaking of the power of prayer, he wrote:—"I therefore believe that the Lord is about to set before you an open door in the Province of Honan. He can turn the hearts of men as the rivers of water. Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. We fight against a finite and conquered foe, and under the banner of an almighty captain. Why should we be dismayed?"

Yours, in haste,
J. H. MACVICAR.

TIENTSIN, November 13, 1891.

The above statement was prepared at Hsin Chen and mailed from there, but as the local