

may change its course frequently and take another or several other directions to the sea.

And now we are home again, and having seen what we have seen and heard what God has wrought, we take fresh courage as we look forward to the time when the people among whom we are working will hear gladly and many believe unto Salvation.

All seem agreed that great changes are impending in this Empire, and the time may now be ripe for a very large ingathering into the Kingdom of God. Certainly never before has China moved forward like she has these last few months, and we look for new movements from the seat of power at Peking. Shall we not as expectantly look for new movements from the seat of power at God's right hand?

THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN CHINA.

With regard to this subject Dr. Leslie writes:—

For some years it has been felt that the unyielding conservatism of thousands of years was surely crumbling, but events have transpired in the history of China during the year 1898 that have marked a progress quite unparalleled and quite unexpected to the large majority of those who ought to know and who have been intimately acquainted with Chinese politics.

This period has been marked by a series of Imperial edicts which have been issued from the recently retired Emperor Kuang Su, and all of them tended to the demolition of things Chinese and for the promotion of things Western.

The plan included radical changes in the Educational system of the country, a system which is thousands of years old, greatly revered, and which stands at the root of the national life; edicts decreed that the old classical essays should be replaced by a knowledge of western sciences and a knowledge of the history and customs of other lands. Temples were to be used for the instruction of students if no other suitable place afforded opportunity, and in some cases the gods had already been cast out and preparations made for the new movement.

Officials favourable to the introduction of such reforms were rapidly promoted to the heads of the most important positions which the Government offers. Such rapid and radical measures were looked upon with some fear by those who had the best interests of the country at heart as being too rapid and before the country was prepared for them.

Great has been the surprise that the educated men have been accommodating themselves to the changed conditions and the hated foreigner. Usually a missionary has been sought out and applied to for books and instruction on these subjects, and in this way it was hoped and is still hoped that the most important class of the community—who hitherto have been unreached and unreachable—were now ready and glad to come and listen to the foreigner and new doors of opportunity for the Gospel thus created.

At this stage the pendulum swung the other way. On the 22nd September the young Emperor was summoned to the apartments of the Empress Dowager (who previously held the reins of power in the conservative direction). Since that memorable date the Emperor has not been seen in public, and although a French physician has been called to attend his Highness in his indisposition (?) there is no certainty that it was the Emperor that he saw. Is the Emperor dead or alive? That is the burning question just now, and while the opinion prevails that he is alive, still he has been so successfully submerged that so far as his influence goes he is dead, and the Empress reigns and with no uncertain grasp. Many of those in power have been deposed, others have been executed, decrees have been recalled, and for the present China has sunk back into the lap of that immovable stagnation which is her certain destruction as a nation.

But every observer recognizes that this cannot last, progress must come, reformation if not re-formation is inevitable. China has reached a crisis, inaction must give way to reaction and a new China formed out of the ruins of the last great Eastern nation to surrender to the civilization of the nineteenth century.

You ask, why do the Foreign powers not force the Government to produce the Emperor, dead or alive? We all ask that. Probably nowhere but in China could such conditions exist that prevents the world from knowing whether the Emperor is alive or dead. Facts are hard nuts to crack.

Mr. Slimmon writes:—"The work here at Hsin Chen is making progress. I was for a few days recently at the outstations of Ho Tao and Pei Mao, and found the believers standing fast. Proof that the Christians at this station are growing is the fact that they have promised to give \$15.00. My own cook, who is not even recorded as a 'catechumen,' is giving nearly a tenth of his wages for Christian work."