



BOAT SCENE IN CHINA.

ADVENTURES IN WESTERN CHINA.

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I.

It is scorching hot, and my little craft is moored under the thick, glossy branches of a dwarf banyan tree. This is the third day since we took up our refuge here, to wait the abatement of the floods, which have come thicker and faster for five days, until the river has risen about fifty feet, and presents anything but a smiling face to timid mariners—and all Chinese sailors are timid. We left Chantu on the bosom of a little freshet, but with every prospect of its speedy fall. We worked day and night down the over-increasing flood until we reached Su-Chou-Foo, where our night labour ceased, because of danger from rocks and rapids. It was the third day on our small rattan boat, when a large craft passed us, with eight or ten persons on board, and a Sedan chair carefully roped to the mat covering. The sailors were rowing at their best, and were evidently intending to run a rapid that seemed, from our point of view, to be very swift. The waves caused by the rough rocks were high and fierce. Our boatmen aimed for the same quarter. In a few moments I heard the sailors cry, "The boat is broken. The boat is broken." And there, right ahead of us, rolling and tumbling on the mad waves, and swept along at a fearful rate, were a number of planks and bundles of wood. The heads of a few men were seen bobbing up and down with the boards they were clinging to.

Our men rowed quickly towards the other side of the river, until they were past the dangerous place, and then, with a little urging upon my part, they steered for the wreckage. The sailors seemed indifferent about the perishing men, and considered only what they could pick up of value. I pressed them to follow the example of two other boats that were busily rescuing the drowning and their floating effects. Would they? Not a bit. They discovered a pole and some wood floating near; around went the boat, and soon the men were fishing out the trifles.

It was both sad and amusing to see the grins of satisfaction and hear the words of delicious delight, whenever an article was landed upon the deck. All my vociferations went for naught, until there was nothing more to be found. It was almost impossible to get them to make an inquiry as to the number that were saved. They chuckled over their booty and turned it over and over with child-like delight. A dead body landed would bring them 800 cash, or 70 cents—a gift from the local officials—and I presume if a floating corpse had been espied they would have made superhuman efforts to have captured it. Farther down the river, we discovered the body of a man whirling along in the current and whirlpools. Two boats were in hot pursuit, and eventually three, and as we turned a bend of the river we saw the prey snatched from the waves.

It is not always pleasant travelling in a small boat; and, as Shakespeare says, "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows." Even so I found it. The heat was intolerable in the low-covered craft; and then, unbeknown to me, the captain a shrewd fellow—who, after signing a paper giving me absolute possession of the boat for myself and baggage, had smuggled on board three fellows, not over-prepossessing in appearance, and quite a cargo of goods to sell at Chung King. I entered a protest at first, but, being anxious to proceed without delay, I allowed the men to stay behind my cabin. You will say, "A cabin on a row boat?" Yes! a sort of one with mat partitions. It is not rare to have strange bedfellows in a Chinese boat. I found too many of them last night for sleep. Among them were the three fellows just referred to, who reclined near my head and smoked an enormous amount of opium and talked most vilely. The more I reproved them the more they smoked. This was too much. The captain knelt and besought me to permit them to stay one night more, but there is a limit even to mercy, and these low mortals were unceremoniously landed at Kiating with all their goods.

I have hired boats at many places, and dealt with all kinds of Chinamen—but, I hear some little fellow say, "The Chinese that I have seen are all alike." Well, they are pretty much alike, yet there is a difference after all. I have met with some very fair dealing ones, but, as a rule, the number of the unfair is greater than the number of the fair. A few bright, big, stories no one objects to, even here, but a continuation of falsehoods and mild deceptions become very insipid food for a foreigner. I wanted a boat for Ichang, and sent two men on the hunt; reports came, and I trotted up down the almost perpendicular steps of Chung King to see the boats, for I would not take anything upon a Chinaman's representation, for his ideas and those of a European are as dissimilar as rabbit and elephant.

I worried out the day in getting a boat, and that a small one. The Hongman recommended the captain and promised the boat at a certain hour. I went aboard at the time appointed and had about all I could do to prevent sunstroke by repeatedly pouring cold water upon my head.

The captain came to me and said his brother would take me down the river. "No, not your brother," I replied, "you will take me down." He couldn't go. "You promised to go, and you must go," was my answer, and I plied more water to my head. The Hongman was sent for and interviewed. He ordered the captain, or supposed captain, to take me down, and bade me good-bye, saying, "If you have any trouble let me know."

At last the rice bag came on board—and not a very fat bag either, but I thought it might hold out for five days, as that was the time stated for taking the journey. Rice bags have singular episodes, and, if they had tongues, they could tell strange tales. The oarsmen, five in number, stowed away the mats, put the oars into the cowhide sockets and were ready. A few interested spectators stood upon the shore, as I supposed, to watch the depar-

ture of an old "foreign devil." But I was abruptly undeceived as to their intentions, for no sooner was the captain on board for the start than babel itself was let loose. This man demanded 1,000 cash, that one 500, and even the littleurchin upon the ad joining boat yelled for his "tea-money."

LESSON NOTES.

FOURTH QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS.

A.D. 47.] LESSON X. [Dec. 4.

WORK AMONG THE GENTILES.

Acts 14. 8-22. Memory verses, 8-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

In his name shall the Gentiles trust.—Matt. 12. 21.

CENTRAL TRUTH.

God draws men to himself by his love, in the works of nature, and of grace.

CIRCUMSTANCES.

Paul and Barnabas, having been driven away from Iconium, had come to Lystra, still further on, and were preaching there.

HELPS OVER HARD PLACES.

Sat . . . Lystra—Probably in the open square, or market-place, where Paul was preaching. *Impotent*—Weak, powerless. *A cripple*—So born, and hence the cure was more wonderful. *Perceiving that he had faith*—He probably had heard them preach often, and tell of the wonders the Lord had done. *In the speech of Lycaonia*—What language is unknown. The apostles had spoken in Greek, which all understood; but the apostles did not understand the native tongue. *Barnabas*—Who was large, and fine looking. *Jupiter*—The chief of the heathen gods. *Paul*—Who was small, but eloquent. *Mercurius*—The messenger of Jupiter, and the god of eloquence. *Jupiter, which was before their city*—The temple and statue of Jupiter. *When the apostles . . . heard of*—It was all spoken in a strange language, and the apostles were probably in the inner court of the house. Timothy was a native of Lystra, with his mother, Eunice, and grandmother, Lois (Acts 16. 1; 2 Tim. 1. 5). He was probably converted at this time. *Passions*—Nature. *Suffered*—Permitted. *Came thither*—To Lystra. *He rose up*—Perhaps by miracle, though it is not so said; and probably Paul was only stunned—not killed. *Derbe*—Twenty miles away. This was the farthest point of the journey. *Confirming the souls*—Making firm, as the tender branch of the vine is hardened into woody fibre. *To continue in the faith*—In their trust in Jesus, no matter who opposed. This was one way of confirming their souls. The next way was by enduring trials. *Tribulation*—"Threshings," as of grain, separating the chaff from the wheat. Trials patiently endured confirm the soul. *Into the kingdom of God*—Into heaven, and into the heavenly character here.

Find in this lesson—

1. That religion helps men's bodies and souls.
2. What faith can do.
3. What God does for men.
4. What our souls need.

REVIEW EXERCISE.

1. Where did Paul go from Iconium? "To Lystra."
2. Who was one of the converts here? "Timothy, who afterwards became Paul's helper."
3. What miracle was wrought here? "A lame man from his birth was cured."
4. What happened to Paul at Lystra? "He was stoned by the mob."
5. Where did he go soon after? "He revisited all the churches he had formed."
6. To what place did he return? "To Antioch, in Syria, whence he was sent out."

CATECHISM QUESTIONS.

Repeat VIII., IX., and X. of the Ten Commandments:

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidervant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbour's.

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