

## OUR HONAN MISSION.

### The Dark Side.

Sad seems the cloud that has suddenly shadowed our Honan mission. The known facts at this writing are: Some buildings are destroyed. All our missionaries are safe. Some of them escaped northward, getting out by Tientsin, others southward, getting out by Shanghai. The latter, about twenty, including men, women and children, were plundered and ill-used en route. Some of them were wounded by stones, clubs, and sword cuts. See later additional particulars on page 266. The Foreign Mission committee has cabled advising a few of the missionaries to remain near to watch proceedings, and the remainder to come home. Several of them would be entitled to furlough next year in any case. The following are remaining in China:—Dr. McClure and Dr. Margaret Wallace, who have taken medical work in connection with the British army. Besides these, there are remaining, ready to re-enter Honan as soon as the way is open: Rev. Messrs. Slimmon, Griffith, Hood, and Mitchell; and Rev. D. McGillivray, who continues in his work in Shanghai. Those coming home are the Goforths, Mackenzies, Malcolms, Leslies and Menzies; with Mrs. McClure, Mrs. Slimmon, and the Misses Dow, M.B., McIntosh, and Pyke.

Buildings destroyed! Missionaries driven out! Honan closed! Those that were sent out from time to time during the past dozen years, with high hopes, now returning. All the time, money, effort that has been expended upon Honan, and such a result! Wherefore this waste?

### The Bright Side.

Our church has benefited. This work was undertaken in the spirit of Christ, in pity for the millions perishing. In doing this work the Church has been walking in the footsteps of Christ and has been the better of that walk. Whatever is done or given in the spirit of love blesses the giver more than it does any other, and even if the object thus sought and wrought for be never attained, there is good received by the doer. Every self-denial for Christ, every gift of love shapes the character more or less into His likeness, and this is a perma-

nent possession. If nothing more should ever come of the Honan Mission, if China should sink back wholly into heathenism, this work has richly paid the Church that has done it, in the growth into the likeness of Christ, in compassion, pity, and self-sacrificing love, that has resulted from the doing of it.

But there are other elements in the brightness. There are some who have accepted the Gospel and have been called home, and are now among the redeemed. In the arithmetic of eternity these would be a rich return for what has been expended.

But the best is that while the missionaries have had to leave for a time, the work is not destroyed. It cannot be. The missionaries had to leave, not only for their own safety, but for that of the native Christians. The language of the latter in many parts of China was, "If you stay we will be in danger because of you, and we may be destroyed together. If you go away there will be less of hatred to us."

These native Christians—and there is quite a number of them in Honan—will be driven to cling more closely to Christ in matters spiritual, and will grow stronger. There may be a sifting, the true from the false, but the wheat becomes purer and the chaff is no loss.

Then there is the foundation work that is laid, in the dispelling of prejudice, and winning the confidence and friendliness of the people. Thousands of hearts in Honan, that have not yet opened to Christ, have opened to his messengers, and have confidence and trust in them. Multitudes that have been healed of their sicknesses by the medical missionaries will remember them with thankfulness, will lament their absence and long for their return. The very sense of want among the people will be an opportunity for the native Christian workers and for the Spirit of God.

When Christian men and women review life from its ending they almost invariably find that the times of trial were the times of blessing. Out of their troubles they came stronger and better. So will it be with the Church of God as a whole. And when the story of the Church in Honan is complete it will be found that not the least fruitful time in its history is the dark period through which it is now passing. God reigns. Let us thank Him and take courage.