

PLEASANT HOURS

PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK.

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"I Will Be a Helper."

BY MRS. ANDERSON.

I MAY not die for Jesus
As many children died,
When those who found their Saviour
Lost everything beside;
But I can live for Jesus
With holy deed and word,
And as a true confessor
May glorify the Lord.

I cannot be an angel,
To wait before the throne,
And at God's word fly swiftly,
His mandates to make known;
But God has noble errands
A child can do aright,
And I may gladly serve him,
A messenger of light.

I may not bear the Gospel
Across the ocean blue,
But as a little helper
May succour those who do.
Full many a drooping banner
Light breezes have unfurled,
And pennons, blest by Jesus,
Oft help to move the world.

CHINESE PAGODAS.

ALMOST as many pagodas may be seen in some parts of China as there are churches in the populous parts of Canada. These buildings were put up many years ago, and are made very strong, of brick or stone and sometimes of more costly material. Some of them contain idols and are inhabited by priests, but many have nothing in them, unless bats and bugs.

Some of these pagodas are very beautiful buildings, decorated with carving and ornaments, and have numerous little bells hanging from them. There is a great deal of superstition about these buildings among the Chinese. It is thought that they have great power to prevent evil influences and are even able to protect a city from the attacks of armies. This belief has been so strong in some places that armies when they intended to capture a city would first destroy the pagoda.

SOME CHINESE CUSTOMS.

The ninth month in China is the end of autumn, and on the ninth day of the month the Chinese go to the highest bit of ground or the loftiest roofs within their reach and employ their time in flying kites.

Punishments for offences of a comparatively light nature are inflicted by making the offender wear a wooden collar, or by piercing the ears with arrows to the ends of which are attached slips of paper on which are inscribed the crimes of the culprit. Frequently the criminals, bearing these signs of their disgrace, are paraded up and down the street, and they are sometimes flogged through the street, preceded by a herald who announces the crimes for which they are thus punished.

The Chinese wear nothing that is tight-fitting. The usual dress in summer of a coolie is a loose-fitting pair of cotton trousers and an equally loose jacket, and in winter he wears quilted cotton clothes. The wealthier classes wear garments of silk, linen, and silk gauze in the summer, and woollen or fur clothes in the winter. They will also wear long tunics coming down to the ankles, with long, full sleeves, and with a belt at the waist. The dress of the women is very similar to that of the men.

The men have the head shaven, except the crown, where the hair is allowed to grow to its full length. The hair is carefully plaited, and falls down the back, forming the "queue," commonly known as the "pigtail." As a general rule the

head is shaved about once in ten days, and as it is impossible for a man to shave his own head, the barber's trade is a large and flourishing one. It is carried on in shops, and by itinerant barbers in the streets while the wealthy summon the barbers to their houses.

When the Chinese wish to describe a person who pretends to be very brave and makes a great parade in order to show his courage, they say that "he is cutting off a lion's head with a battle axe." A coward who boasts of his courage they call "a paper tiger." They compare a person who pretends to be what he is not to a fox who tries to look as noble and strong as a tiger. If a person is ignorant of books, they will say: "Turn him upside down, but not a drop of ink will come out of him."

countries like China there are tigers and serpents, and other dangerous beasts.

Well, in South China there are many tigers, and they do sometimes kill people. But the danger I mean is not from tigers.

What I mean is that your father and mother, if they were heathens, would very likely have killed you, or else thrown you out to starve and die. A great many little girls are killed in China by their own parents every year.

The boys are not killed in this way. When their parents are poor they think it very nice to have a boy baby, because, when he grows a little bigger, he will help to gather wood and dry grass to light the fires, will lead the oxen out to eat, and when he gets stronger will work in the fields, and buy and sell, and earn money.

They do not know that God has forbidden murder, and that the Lord Jesus loves little children, but in a heathen home even the love of a father and mother is not known as we know it here.

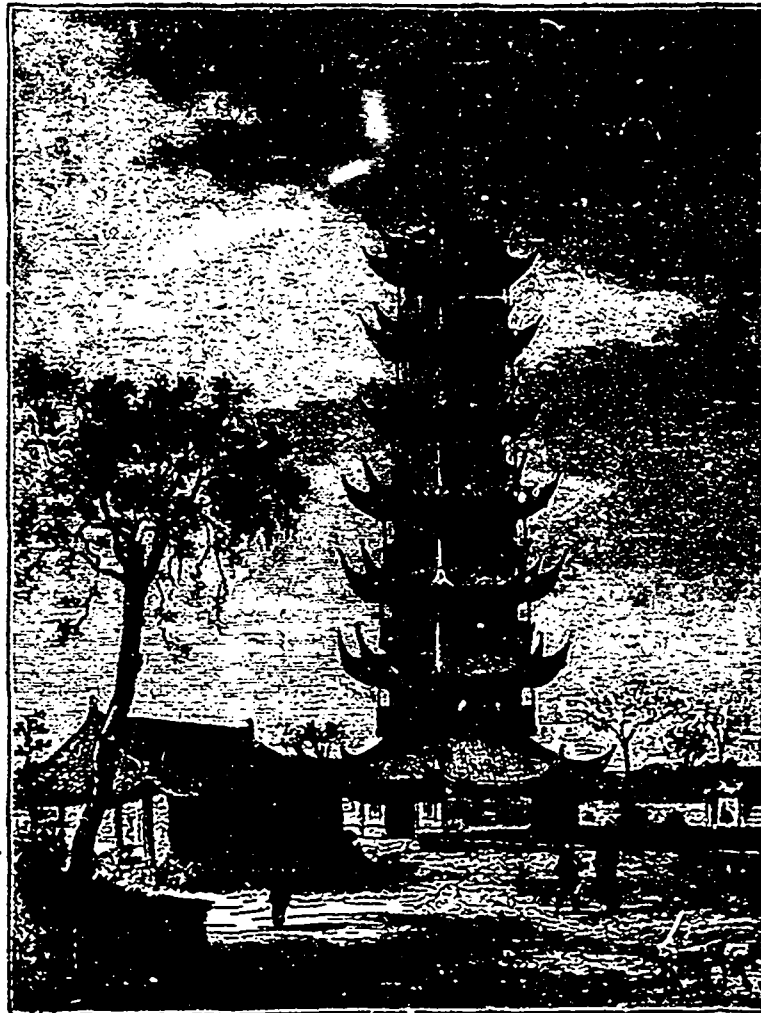
If a girl's life is spared, her parents will learn, even in China, to love her and her brothers too, but they care less to make her happy, and she will have a great deal of hard work to do.

It is not good for anyone to be idle, and hard work is no hardship; but a girl in China is not sent to school, she is not taught to read and write, and she gets none of the loving care which makes the happiness of your lives. The boys, too, have hard work, and many of them never go to school. Above all, neither boys nor girls ever hear the sweet words and the wonderful stories of the Bible.

The only religion they are taught is to go sometimes to the temples of the idols, and kneel before ugly images of wood and plaster, or to burn sticks of incense at the door of their own house, or at the graves of their grandparents.

There is nothing to teach them the wonderful love of God, and they grow up believing that the woods and hills, the houses and streets, are full of bad spirits and ghosts who can hurt them in many ways; and that there is no one who is good enough and strong enough to take care of them. They learn to tell lies, and use bad and ugly language, to fight, and cheat, and gamble.

That is how you would have grown up if you had been born in China. And if there were no missionaries, all these bad and sad things, and a great many more, would go on year after year. — Messenger.



A CHINESE PAGODA.

WHAT I WOULD SEE IN CHINA.

BY REV. JOHN G. GIBSON, OF SWATOW.

You are banded together to help in mission work, and I hope you will always remember that that means taking part in the work of Christ himself.

You in this country cannot know what need there is in other lands for the work of missions.

Do you know what it would be like to be there?

If you had been born in China some years ago, your parents would most likely have been heathens. What does that mean? It means a great deal that I cannot explain to you.

But if you are a girl, it means that your life would have been in danger when you were a little baby.

Perhaps you think I mean that in far-off

But a girl cannot work in the fields. She will eat as much as her brothers, and not be nearly so useful. If they keep her, or, as they say, if they feed her, till she is sixteen or eighteen years old, they can sell her to be the wife of a boy in another family.

The Chinese generally marry very young, and the fathers and mothers choose the husbands and wives. But very often they think it is too much trouble to take care of a little girl till she is old enough to marry, and it costs too much money to give her food and clothes for so many years. So they sell her to another family, to be fed and cared for till she grows up and can become the wife of one of the boys in that family. But if one or two girls are already in a family, another little sister is thought to be too many, and her father and mother kill her, or throw her out to die.

A SICK BOY'S REQUEST.

Now working for Christ in Liberia is a young man named Walters, who tells in the *Spirit of Missions* a touching story of his boyhood. He was one of Bishop Penick's boys in the school at Cape Mount, Liberia, when one of the numerous tribal wars across the frontier broke out. Several fugitives took refuge in the school, and among them a boy who had been badly hurt and was half starved. Walters took care of the lad and did all he could for him; but he says: "He grew worse and worse; but, boy as I was, I never suspected anything serious. But one evening he sent for me, and, after thanking me profusely for what I had done for him, with tears in his eyes and faltering voice, he said: 'Joe, I am going to die, and I want you to pray for me.' Judge of my surprise and confusion, since I was not a Christian, and hence did not know how to point a dying heathen boy to 'the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' I tried to persuade him that he was getting better, and that this was only a sickly frenzy which would wear off after a good night's sleep. But to no purpose. He assured me that he was about to die, and begged me to kneel down by his bed and pray for him. I finally consented, knelt down by his bed, and said the Lord's Prayer. He thanked me heartily, and asked if I would still grant one last petition. I consented. He said: 'My last request is that you will give me a prayer to die with.' After hesitating, I told him to say: 'Komba Im boule' (Lord, forgive me).

"I left him, thinking that after a good sleep he would better by morning. But about four o'clock next morning I was awakened and told that he had just died, and that he died repeating: 'Komba Im boule.'

"Since then I have been to the United States to learn how to be a missionary, and am now, I trust, better qualified to point a seeking soul to Christ."