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Woman's Work in China.

THERE is an Eastern proverb that says "The axe
handle is of wood; the tree is not cut down save by
a branch of itself." The Evangelization of women in
India is acknowledged to be possible only through
the agency of Christian women. In China, women are
not so inaccessible to male missionaries as in India; but
there too, there is a work for the energy of consecrated
lady missionaries which they only can do.

This work was first begun in China as elsewhere by
the wives of Missionaries whose self-denying labors
can never be told. They still continue to do their part
but it is now taken up by an increasing army of ladies
who are able to carry it forward on a scale that would
otherwise have been impossible. Their methods of
work can be classified as educational and evangelistic.

The educational embraces first the Boarding Schools
in which the girls are as in similar institutions else-
where, under the constant direction and control of the
teachers, and in which it is possible to attain a higher
literary standard than in day schools. Boarding
schools however involve a larger expenditure of money
and strength, than the day schools and accordingly
every effort is put forth to make them serve in a
higher degree the purpose for which all missions exist—
the conversion of the pupils to Christ. There are ques-
tions of policy upon which missions differ, as for
example whether the children of heathen parents ought
to be received into the schools. In the majority of
cases whilst the children of Christian parents get the
preference, the children of heathen parents are admitted

so far as accommodation will allow. Results seem to
justify that course, inasmuch as many instances are
known in which the children brought the Gospel into
their homes and were instrumental in the conversion of
their parents.

Day schools for girls, and boys as well, have this
advantage that the school books are brought home and
the members of the family are more or less in daily
touch with the work of the school. Of course in all
these mission school Scripture knowledge has the pro-
minent place, so that they more nearly correspond to
our Sabbath schools, and yet the Chinese classics are
taught as well as elementary books of Western learning.
As far as possible only Christian teachers are employed,
and that is becoming more possible every year. When
heathen teachers are employed in secular work, the
missionaries pay regular visits so as to take the over-
sight and impart religious instruction. Besides these
there are Training schools for women. Some exclu-
sively for the training of Bible women, others are
intended for the improvement of the female members of
churches, and yet others for heathen young women and
mothers who are sometimes received into institutions
for that purpose, and who remain a few weeks or months,
according to the time that can be spared from their own
homes. Women who previous to this instruction "have
not had learning enough to read a book, or vocabulary
enough to understand a sermon or mental discipline
enough to follow continuous discourses, have developed
in no small degree a new type of character and of life."
Some of the educated Chinese see the value of this to
their people, but the majority of men, recognizing the
readiness with which women can acquire knowledge,
regard their education with alarm lest they should come
to know more than their husbands.

The educational work is all evangelistic in spirit,
but there is a department of work known as evangelistic
in contradistinction to what is called educational. There
are the public gatherings in which the Gospel is preached
to heathen and Christian alike; Sunday school classes
for women and girls; prayer meetings and Bible read-
ings for Christian women alone; visitations from house
to house for the purpose of telling the Gospel story to
the women in their own homes, and there are times set
apart when visits are received and visitors are conversed
with and instructed in the way of life. Each of these
methods has advantages, peculiar to itself. In the
meetings with Christian mothers alone, e.g., the mis-
sionary discovers the peculiarities of their home life
and can counsel and help them. In visitation from
house to house in the city, the missionary is often fol-
lowed by such crowds of men and boys, even into the
houses, that little instruction can be imparted. This
is accordingly largely done by native Bible women, who
not only instruct in the homes; but invite to the meet-