

HANKOW, 28th Oct., 1878.

Along with the Rev. Mr. John of Hankow, and Mr. Wilson of the National Bible Society, I have had a most interesting trip to the country. On Wednesday, 16th October, we left Hankow in a boat for the city Shau-gan, some forty miles north of Hankow. The great object was to visit a village a little way past Shau-gan, where the people were reported to have cast away all their idols, in consequence of a visit of a native of the village who had become a Christian in Hankow in connection with the London Bible Mission.

Wednesday was cold and rainy; and as we had a strong head-wind, we had not gone far from Hankow when we had to stop for the night. Thursday was merely a repetition of Wednesday. The whole country was flooded, with the farmhouses and hamlets built upon mounds appearing as so many islets. In this island archipelago we had to make what speed we could against the wind by rowing and poling. Usually there was a winding creek through the plain, and the boatmen walk on the bank and drag the boat along. Friday was no better than Thursday, but in the afternoon we passed Shau-gan, and felt encouraged. We did not land, but pushed on, intending to spend any spare time on our way back. After breakfast on Saturday we came to our journey's end, and got out of the boat to walk three miles to the village. Near the river there was a pretty large village. We passed along the street, and at the far end Mr. John, and Shew the native preacher, who came with us, spoke for some time to the crowd which collected. After this we started through the rain, and made the best of our way to the village which had forsaken idolatry. When we arrived we were invited into a house—a mud cottage of the most primitive description, and yet in point of cleanliness and comfort it would compare with some in the north isles of Scotland. Immediately the people commenced dropping in. All available seats were soon occupied, and ere long there was barely standing room in the small apartment. The audience was mostly males, and included children in arms, and the patriarch of the village, more than eighty years of age. After

some talk, Mr. John discovered that things were exactly as represented. The people had lost all faith in idols—all idolatrous symbols were removed from the house we were in—but they knew almost nothing of the truth. When questioned about the movement that had taken place, they said they knew what "Lin" was before he became a Christian, and they saw what he was when he came back to visit them. Speaking of the change, they used the remarkable expression, "Lin is a new man." Both Mr. John and Shew the native preacher, exhorted them, and tried to impart the rudiments of the truth. They listened with attention, and comprehended something of what was said. There can be little question but that a real work has been begun and will continue; but it is a mistake to suppose that the heathen, even when seeking the light, can at once embrace the truth and rejoice in it when it is presented to them.

I may tell you how Lin was converted. One day, after preaching in the chapel, Mr. John was talking in the vestry to some people about what he had been saying. A man entered and said "I want to speak a word with you, foreign teacher." On being asked what he had to say, he replied, "that he heard it stated that Jesus saved from sin—was it true? Well, can Jesus save me?" Mr. John asked him what sins he had got. He named several, and after some talk Mr. John prayed with and gave him an invitation to attend the chapel services. In due time the man was received into the church, and this present movement in his native village is a testimony to his life as a Christian man.

All the time we stayed at the village the good man of the house was troubled about getting food ready for us; but he was told we had a servant at the boat preparing dinner. When we returned, some of them accompanied us, to get books to take back to the village; and we discovered that as we had not stayed to dinner, they had sent a present of two fowls, two pigeons, and a few eggs.

We immediately started back in the direction of Shau-gan, and arrived there before dark, but not in time to go ashore that day. The native preacher, however, went ashore to some relatives in the city,