

THE NORTHERN MESSENGER

AND SABBATH-SCHOOL COMPANION.

VOLUME XXXI., No. 40.

MONTREAL & NEW YORK, OCTOBER 2, 1896.

30 Cts. Per An. Post-Paid.

A UNIQUE PERSONALITY.

All lovers of missions will read with joy on another page of this issue the tribute paid to them by Li Hung Chang, the Viceroy of China, when on his visit to this country a few weeks ago. Perhaps, too, we shall hear of certain naval officers and others taking back some of the slanders they have uttered against these same missionaries.

The interest of Governor Li in Christian missions dates as far back as 1872. His wife, a person of fine character and high attainment, fell seriously ill, and the best of the Chinese doctors could do nothing for her. Finally Miss Howard, a doctor in connection with the American Presbyterian Mission in Peking, was called in and effected a complete cure. In gratitude for this Governor Li established a large hospital, employed the best foreign talent to manage it, and has supported it ever since.

The western world first heard of Li Hung Chang thirty-seven years ago, when he cooperated with Chinese Gordon in quelling the terrible Taeping rebellion. In Gordon he had the greatest confidence, and although he was at the time governor of the great province of Pe-chee-lee, he placed himself under the military control of the foreigner. Unfortunately Gordon had no warrant for the same confidence in him. His treachery at the fall of Soochow caused the death of the seven Wangs whom Gordon had passed his word to protect. This so infuriated Gordon that he seized his revolver and rushed to Li's tent to execute vengeance himself, but Li wisely had made himself scarce. Gordon then resigned his command of the forces. All entreaties and promises of honor on the part of the Chinese failed to make him return, and he only yielded two months later when he saw that if he did not do so the rebels would regain all they had lost, and the fearful bloodshed would go on worse than ever. Later, explanations were made which somewhat cooled Gordon's wrath, and from then till the time of Gordon's death the two men were fast friends.

One of the most striking events of Li's recent western tour was his going with his suite to lay a wreath on General Gordon's grave.

Nowhere in the world do we see such fulfilment of the only commandment with promise as we do in China. Nowhere in the world are parents so honored. On the death of a parent the sons resign all honors and employment, go to the ancestral tomb and mourn for months in sackcloth and ashes.

The mother of Li Hung Chang died when she was over ninety. He at once resigned his appointments and gave himself up to mourning at her sepulchre. But things went so badly at the court that the Emperor commanded him to resume his duties at once.

During the recent war Li Hung Chang was in supreme charge of the naval and military forces sent to Corea. He was not only Prime Minister, but Minister of War, Marine and Finance, a combination that in a constitutional country would not be thought of. Early in the war he was deprived of his yellow jacket and peacock's feather, the two highest honors in the kingdom, and was also deprived of the chief command, but in February, 1895, he was restored to full favor and sent to Japan to negotiate for peace. While there the attempt was made upon his life

to which he refers when he thanks the Christian people for their prayers. He was severely wounded in the cheek with a bullet, but quickly recovered, and concluded his treaty of peace.

A returned missionary a few days ago described Li as a sly old fox-like all Chinese officials, not to be trusted. His family is the strongest in China, and like all such families, their wealth is made by the oppression of the poor.

'When he talks about religion,' says the New York 'Independent,' 'he talks not as we imagine a heathen ought to talk, but as one who is not far from us in thought and feeling, though differing widely from us in matters of creed, custom and ceremony.'

'He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in darkness.'—1 John ii., 9.



LI HUNG CHANG.