



MR. GOFORTH AT A CHINESE FAIR.

Come, boys and girls, let me introduce you to Mr. Goforth, our Missionary to Honan, whose face, through the kindness of the *Presbyterian Review*, you are now looking at, and who in a letter that was printed in the same paper, tells about a visit to a Chinese fair.

Would not our young people like to be with him for an hour or two, to see the strange looking people, with their curious dress, and rickety shoes, and long queues or pig tails, and listen to their strange language? We cannot very well get there just now, but we will listen to him as he tells about his visit to the fair. He says:—

“I suppose my young friends would like to hear about my visit to a Chinese fair last Saturday. I went in company with two Chinese preachers, a Chinese doctor and an old Chinese teacher,

I rode on a mule; one of the teachers had a horse, while the other three rode on donkeys.

It did not take long to trot over to the Town of the Four Virgins, for this is the name of the town at which the fair is held. Passing through the streets we see crowds as at home. The only differ-

ence was, here all is curious because all is Chinese. To see it you would wonder at it just as a Chinaman would wonder if he passed through London at a Western Fair time.

The Chinese do not believe in the same kind of a fair that we do. They bring their very best not to take prizes, but to sell. The animals stand around all fat and sleek, waiting a buyer. All other things are on display with the same end in view.

The price of everything throughout the country is regulated by the selling rates at the fairs. Suppose you want to buy from a farmer a donkey, a bag of sweet potatoes, a chicken, or a bunch of onions. If he has been at the fair and knows the prices there, he will sell, but if not he won't sell, even if you offer more than he could possibly get at the fair. So you see, these fairs are very important in China. Anything that is sold in China can be bought at a fair, not in the regular stores, but in stores made of matting erected specially for the fair time.

At this one a part in the town was chosen where two roads cross each other. On either side of the road these tent like stores, were put up and joined at the roof, so that the street was fully covered in. I bought a pair of shoes at one shop.

Of course the Chinese friends who accompanied me to the fair were along. We sat down on a bench before the counter.

It is in Chinese custom to give the customer a cup of tea, so at once a cup of tea was poured out for each of us. The shoes were tried on, Chinese shoes, not foreign shoes. Then we drank our tea; another cup was poured out all round. The crowd jammed the roadway to stare at the odd looking foreigner, for we are odd in Chinese eyes. After chatting a little while, we drank the second cup of tea, no milk or sugar. One thing which would astonish you is the number of shops that sell nothing but fans. China is a hot country, and though all go bareheaded in Summer everyone has a fan. It was a