

cumstances no less barbarous. Want of women is necessarily felt in these two provinces, and, to supply the deficiency, there are some who gain their livelihood by going into the neighbouring provinces to purchase and occasionally to steal female children, whom they then take to those places, where they hope to sell them. While crossing the province of Fokien, on my way to the north of China, I daily saw a number of these young children publicly exposed for sale in the market, with ducks, geese, pigs, and other articles of merchandise. I was so long obliged to witness this distressing spectacle, that, though it is now more than twelve years since I travelled that road, I have never forgotten what I then saw.

Even those children who are received with affection on the day of their birth are not always secure. It often happens that at the end of a few years, either from adversity, or some other reason, their parents are tired of them, and then do not shrink from employing the most atrocious means to get rid of them. In a village where I was for a short period, a mother had three children, the youngest about two years and a half old, on whom nature had lavished all those gifts which make children objects of interest at that tender age, and which ought therefore to have endeared him to his mother. But unfortunately she imagined that this child was one too many, and that it was not her duty to support him, and his death was accordingly resolved on. One day this woman, who watched the child as we watch an animal we desire to kill, threw something over him, and then jumping with her whole weight on her innocent victim, kept it pressed to the ground until she perceived that it had expired; the piercing shrieks, the convulsive efforts of the child were unable to move the heart of this unnatural parent, who had only given him birth to deprive him of it in this horrible manner.

It would be no difficult matter, Gentlemen, to relate other anecdotes no less horrible; but I do not desire to harrow up your feelings uselessly; the enormity of the evil is not unknown to you, as is proved by your zeal and eagerness to aid us. It will therefore be more in conformity with your wishes and the object for which you are assembled here, if I speak of the means by which you may, to a certain degree, do away with this horrible evil.

We may in each Mission select a few families, or simply some poor and aged women, who will undertake for a small sum to nurse and bring up two children who have been rescued from death. These women must be poor; or they would scarcely consent to receive them. They must be advanced in years; so that the unexpected circumstance of a child in their care would not give rise to suspicious prejudicial to religion. For the northern provinces, where provisions are dearer, and where the rigour of the climate requires more expensive clothing, every child would require an annual pension of £3, or £4; in the south, two-thirds, and even the half, would be enough.

It will be also necessary to have some prudent and pious Christians to