

a warning to the public not to give food to the prisoner on pain of death. Many a poor wretch has ended a miserable and painful career by slow starvation in the midst of plenty, as a warning to the well-fed passers by, who dared not help him if they could.

Well in the last part of the procession was a large number of the elite of the city, with here and there one wearing a mock kang, i.e., the prisoner's board above spoken of. Sometimes an infant in arms has one around the neck. These were to signify in the one case a voluntary assumption for the day, of this symbol of sin and shame, either as penance for their own or some relatives sin, in the case of the child though not voluntary, it has the same meaning, with this additional, that it aims to secure the good will of the god of medicine and thus be preserved from sickness and death.

Following this large company of civilians are two massive censers borne on long poles by a large number of men. As they moved along the crowd by the way cast in their bundles of incense sticks into a common receptacle and two men were kept constantly busy throwing it into the censers, the flames the while leaping higher than our low roofed houses upon which we sat. The next scene, though more horrible and repulsive than the others, was after all only on a par with them. Thirty or more young men—from fifteen to forty years old—walking painfully slow and with measured tread. Stopping betimes a few minutes to get their balance and continue their journey. Each one has his arms extended at right angles from his body and propped up by a beautiful polished stick reaching from hand to hip. From the fleshy part of each lower arm was suspended by an iron hook sunk in the flesh, a steel censer full of burning incense. 'Twas a strange, a sad sight! For probably ten consecutive hours these intelligent looking men bore that torture with the hope that that would atone for some of their own or their relatives sins; or secure the favour of the god of medicine on behalf of some sick friend, or the fulfilment of a vow conditionally given on the restoration of some loved one to good health. Truly the heathen are more ready to suffer for their false gods, without thought of reason or beneficence, than we are ready for Christ's dear sake to endure hardness, though there is in the suffering at once a present beneficent ministry, and reasonableness, and afterwards an eternal joy.

The day's proceedings were closed by an event more tragic and more sad than anything I have mentioned. In front of the temple where the god was visiting was dug a deep wide pit, into which an immense amount of incense was thrown and fired. There the grand oblation of the day was offered. A poor wretch who was intensely anxious for the recovery of a near relative—some said 'twas his mother—in order to propitiate the god and save the life of that relative by giving his own, he leaped into the flaming pit and was speedily consumed. Of course his "good and glorious deed (?) " was applauded and his tablet will be worshipped from henceforth by all his relatives.

It reminds one of that Scripture, "Peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die but God commendeth His love toward us in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Though more noticeable, was this poor man's tragic and sad fate any more hopeless than that of thousands who here daily cross death's sullen stream, possessed of a like false faith?

Of our journey down the river in a house-boat, of the experiences, scenes and incidents by the way, of how when we saw foreigners, i.e., American, English, etc., at the settlement in Tientsin, we could not help but stand and look at them; and of our journey up the river to Tung Cho I cannot now speak. Just one impression made on that journey I will record. As we were leaving Tientsin a sharp bend in the Pei Ho brings us in full view of the ruins of the Roman Catholic cathedral and orphanage. Its bold, beautiful front, with even the frail iron and brass ornaments unharmed, gave no hint of the view—blackened, gutted, crumbling ruins—which another angle in the river at that moment presented. Is it not a symbol of Roman Catholicism to-day? She has gates fast locked, a fair appearing front, an ornate ritual—but within all is dead and empty—"dead while she liveth."

It is just eighteen years ago this day since that massacre at Tientsin and not a foreigner in North China knew what an hour would bring forth. When I remember what transpired on the 21st of June, 1870, and contrast that with the picture that is before me

on the 21st of June, 1888, I cannot check the exclamation "What hath God wrought!" I would fain now speak something of the annual meeting of the North China Missions, A. B. C. F. M. It was a treat and a spiritual refreshing for me to meet the brethren. Missionaries usually have minds of their own, and the North China Mission members are not an exception to the rule. Yet although views were advocated wide as the antipodes apart, all words and actions were so permeated with the spirit of Christ that I am not aware of any disagreement after the majority gave their vote in favour. Our prayer meetings were feasts "of fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined." I refused—for reasons which I will not mention here—to be re-appointed to Pasiw. So Mrs. Winchester and I are stationed at Tung Cho until further notice. The mission did me the honour to appoint me to preach the annual sermon next year. At Tung Cho there are three missionaries and their wives—besides my wife and I—a doctor and his wife, and two single ladies. The reason why there are so many here is because we have a high school and theological seminary here. The missionaries are scholarly men and indefatigable workers. I am glad to be with them. A week ago yesterday when we were in the chapel attending Chinese prayers, we thought it prudent to stop the exercises for a little while and retire to a vacant yard close by, so as to let an earthquake go past. It began with a low rumbling indistinct sound, followed by a succession of earth waves, which made the big timbers of the chapel creak and the whole building to sway to and fro. The preacher stopped and we all quietly but quickly left the building and stood near by waiting developments. After two or three successive and light shocks, all was still, and we re-peopled the church and finished the service. In about an hour and a half we had another less severe shock, and about eleven o'clock yet another. Some of the gods fell from the roof of a temple near us, beside which and the cracking of some of our walls, I know of no other damage in this vicinity. When the only fixed thing of which many people know and put their trust in—*terra firma*—begins to sway and quiver as an aspen leaf before the surly blast of autumn, one would think it would cause them to stop and consider their latter end. Alas! that it produces nothing more than superstitious, craven-hearted, momentary fear. "If one rose from the dead yet would they not believe." Perhaps you would like to know the Chinese philosophy of this phenomenon. They advance a number of different explanations. From all I can learn the most popular is the following. We live on a layer of earth, beneath which is a sheet of water, beneath which is a stratum of gold. In this sandwiched wake lives and moves a gigantic leviathan. For some reason—never without good cause—the aforesaid big fish winks with its eyelashes to declare its anger with some one or more, and when it winks the earth quakes. All this is true (?) because there is a hole beneath the Pagoda at the North East Gate of Tung Cho, where a man once fell in while trying to steal the silver bowls in the god of that institution, and to this day if you drop a stone down you can hear it drop a long time after.

I have already written at much greater length and more rambling than I had calculated. I shall leave my visit to Pekin, fifteen miles from here, and some missionary incidents for another epistle. I am sorry to have to chronicle the fact that Mrs. Winchester and myself do not stand this climate very well. I have been poorly ever since the hot weather commenced, about two months ago. To suffer with headache and nervous exhaustion, almost daily for a while past, to be tongue-tied among this people and make so slow progress in the vernacular; to be daily more and more conscious of the crowds trooping past me to a hopeless, Christless death and unable to move finger or tongue to help them, is no small sorrow. I can hardly experience greater. But please do not interpret these words as a complaint. Far from it, God has richly blessed our souls, and am sure our Father has some special good behind this dark veil and I am just waiting patiently to see what surprise He has in store for us. "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before His presence with exceeding joy. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

A. B. WINCHESTER.

Tung Cho, Tientsin, North China, June 21, 1888.

## HOME AND FOREIGN MISSION WORK.

The Master has but one great work. Each branch is all important. Does the Church give to each the encouragement and support it deserves? There seems to be a strange romance about Foreign work, that, in the eyes of the Church, lifts it far above Home Mission work. A young man, leaving college, gives himself to Foreign work. He is a hero from the start. He is taken up and praised and advertised as a great man. Before he leaves he is assured by the whole Church that his salary of \$1,200 or \$1,500 will be paid in advance, and every convenience and luxury provided. He must keep out of the sun all day. He must spend three or four months each year on the mountains, and every seventh year on furlough. He is expected to work in the way and to the extent that he thinks best, and report it himself. We believe it has always been faithful. The most ordinary, commonplace movements are paraded through all our papers. On his return, the learned Assembly, Synod, Presbytery and people lionize him for a year. He deserves it all. He has done good, faithful work.

Another young man from the same college class, of equal ability and earnestness, gives himself to Home work in Manitoba. Not a single paper notes his departure. Before he leaves he is plainly told by the whole Church that he shall receive a sum, based upon the Presbytery's report of his year's work, in no case to exceed \$400, to be supplemented by what the people may give. The salary is supposed to be \$800 or \$900. It has never averaged \$600. There is no provision for a vacation or trip to the mountains or the seashore. There is to be no furlough so long as body and soul will hold together. He must preach three or four times every Sunday, and drive thirty or forty miles for three months under a sun as hot as ever shines in India or China and seven months as cold as Greenland. His faithfulness and efficiency are largely determined by the statistical report. With the houses two miles apart and every person working sixteen hours a day, his circle of society is select. He seldom receives an encouraging word. His opportunities for self-sacrifice are almost up to the average. These two young men are equally able, equally honest and faithful, does each receive the encouragement and support he deserves? G.

## WHAT IS THE MEANING OF "LAYMAN"?

MR. EDITOR,—I write to THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN at this time, for information as to what the judicatories of the Presbyterian Church deem the word "layman" to mean in connection with a congregation, pastor, elders, and the common members and adherents. Is an elder a layman, simply, as the rest of the Church are who are not ordained to the teaching eldership or ministry?

The question hinges upon the conception of whether the ruling elder be ex-officio a governing clerical power, and, therefore, holding a separate status from the great bulk of the laity. For my own part I have always looked upon an elder as being an associate with the clergy, therefore a grade above the common layman, and I find that lexicographers bear me out in this definition; as vide Webster's rendering of an "elder in the Presbyterian Church," and likewise his definition of a "layman."

I noticed sometime ago in your editorial remarks, rebutting a correspondent's opinion that the laity were not equitably represented in our Church courts, that you made it to appear that said laity were duly represented thereat, by a ruling elder being allowed a seat and vote at the meeting of General Assembly for each and every minister at the court. And in your last issue, August 15, I find "Knoxonian," inculcating the same assumption, when treating of denominations sometimes rejecting or being opposed to the introduction of any beneficial reform simply because it may be practiced by some other sect of Christians, where he says, "Presbyterians have laymen in all their Church courts."

I would like very much, and possibly many more in the Church, to have a deliverance upon this point of definition by those conversant with the judicatory usage of the Church. Individually I hold that although an elder may be made out to be merely a layman, that even then the great laity are not justly allowed a voice in Church legislation. Waiting for further light, as I hold the views oft put forth, as somewhat misleading, I subscribe, DD. MCF.

Almonte, Ont., August 16, 1888.