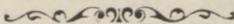


Chung Hwa
7/14

PARTICULARS CONCERNING THE LAST HOURS OF THE
MISSIONARIES MASSACRED AT TAIKU, SHANSI,

ON 31ST JULY, 1900.

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Chas. W. Mason
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PARTICULARS CONCERNING THE LAST HOURS OF THE MISSIONARIES MASSACRED AT TAIKU, SHANSI,

ON 31ST JULY, 1900.

The two men relating the following story were not known to me in Shansi, but they have given the account several times without any variation and I believe it is true. They brought with them a diary letter written by Mr. Clapp detailing events up to July 16th at which date the Missionaries had given up all hope of being saved as a decree had come from the Governor Yuh sien to murder them. This story shows how nobly some of the Chinese Christians stood by the missionaries to the very last and perished with them.

E. H. Edwards, M.B. Edin.

Paoting Fu, March, 1901.

THE STORY OF THE NATIVES.

I, Sibsingheng, am 28 years old. My home is in Tatungfu but I was baptised three years ago by Mr. Thompson at the village of Rentsuen near Taikuhsien, where I was employed as gatekeeper for some years. My cousin, Sihsingsan, is 25 years old and was baptised by Mr. Clapp two years ago. He has been cook to Mrs. Clapp for three years.

On June 29th, I was at Rentsuen and at that time we had not heard of the burning of the premises at T'aiyuen-fu and the death of Miss Coombs on June 27th. On that day (29th) Mr. Davis sent me to T'ai-

yuen-fu with a note to Mr. Stokes. I arrived soon after noon and going to the hospital compound where Mr. Stokes formerly lived, found the courtyard full of people who were pulling down the still burning buildings. I then went to Mr. Farthing's house but finding soldiers both at the front and back doors did not attempt to enter. The same day I returned to Ren-tsuen and told Mr. Davis all I had seen. The next day (Saturday 30th) he went to the village of Li-man-chwang and took Miss Partridge who was living there alone to Tai-ku. On Sunday, July 18th the mission premises at Ren-tsuen were sacked and I went first to Li-man and then on to Tai-ku, where I found all the foreigners gathered, those who had been living on the south suburb having come into the city that day. There were still living on the south suburb several Chinese Christians, among them being the teachers Liu and Shang and their families, a female school teacher named Fan-ku-niang and a lad called Er-wu. These all considered the danger so great that they deemed it wisest to escape to the hills. They were only there seven days and then returned as they found they could not conceal their hiding place. Fan-ku-niang and Er-wu then went to the city house while the others remained in the suburb. There were now quite a number of us gathered

with the foreigners and we met every day for worship and learning the scriptures. We committed to memory a few verses each day until we could repeat nearly the whole of chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17 of John's Gospel.

During this month (July) sad tidings reached us of the massacre of missionaries in other places, and as many disquieting rumours were in the city as to what was to happen to the foreigners, the Chinese on the premises gradually quietly left the mission compound until on July 31st there were only some eight of us left with the missionaries. On that day between three and four in the afternoon I was talking with Mr. Davis and Miss Partridge about giving help to a man named Yao, who had been servant to Mr. and Mrs. Pigott at Sheo-yang, but had had to flee with them and had come back without any money. My cousin was in the kitchen preparing some cake, when suddenly and quite unexpectedly we heard a cry in the distance "kill, kill" which came gradually nearer. I at once went to an upper storey and saw soldiers leading the Boxers towards the mission house shouting as they came. I waited until they set fire to the buildings facing the street and broke in the big gate. The elder Liu was calmly sitting in a chair in the court at the front of the chapel. I waited until I saw two men take him by his hair and begin to kill him and having flung a brick at them (not knowing what else to do) I fled to the back of the house where I found gathered on the flat roof of a building Mr. and Mrs. Clapp, Miss Partridge, Miss Bird, Mr. Williams, Mr. Davis and several Chinese—Pan-ku-niang, Pao-er, Er-wu-tsi and my cousin. Er-wu-tsi escaped over a wall into a neighbouring temple, but his brother Si-ching (a lad of about 16) was in the court below and had armed himself with a knife and said he was not afraid and would not run away. When I reached the Missionaries I told them the soldiers and Boxers were killing elder Liu, and Miss Partridge, and Miss Bird urged us to leave them and try to save our lives. Mrs. Clapp looked at us but was too much overcome to say

anything. Some of us escaped into the neighbouring temple and I and Er-wu-tsi managed to reach the city wall without being noticed, and finding a place where the wall sloped we ventured to slide down and fortunately reached the bottom unhurt. Er-wu-tsi immediately fled westwards but I hid in a ditch till nightfall wishing to know what had become of my cousin. Towards nightfall I emerged from my hiding place and climbed a tree within sight of the south gate. When nearly dark I saw some one pass, who looked like my cousin and gave a little cough. He immediately turned round and I descended from my hiding place and we were together once again. He told me that when he fled from the Mission house he hid among some reeds that were growing close to the city wall. From his hiding place he could occasionally hear shots being fired in the direction of the mission house. After about an hour they ceased, and then before very long a number of people passed within a short distance of where he was and he could hear them speaking of those who had been killed. They said these were elder Liu, six foreigners and Fang Ku-niang. We found out afterwards that an old man of 70 named Wu, Ling Sien-seng and the lad Si-ching also perished at the same time.

I should have mentioned that on July 25th or 26th the house of elder Liu was burnt and his daughter-in-law killed, but his son and grandson fled. Before that elder Liu had been called to the yamen and urged by his friends there to recant and save himself, but he answered, "No, the mandarin may kill me first." This official was really friendly to foreigners and was removed because he would not carry out Yu-hsien's orders to kill the foreigners. Two days after he was removed the massacre occurred.

On the night of July 31st we stayed with a friend named Tai in the south suburb, but left very early the next morning and arrived on August 2nd at Fen Cheo-fu. Directly Mr. Atwater saw me he surmised something was wrong and took me to his own room and then I broke to him and Mr.

Lundgren the sad news. My cousin saw Mr. and Mrs. Price and told them. Mrs. Price wept very bitterly and Mr. Price tried to comfort her. The next day I was telling Mrs. Price, Mrs. Atwater, Mrs. Lundgren and Miss Eldred what had taken place at Taiku when Mrs. Price asked me, "Do you think Mrs. Clapp was pleased at the prospect of soon seeing the Lord?" I replied, "Yes, she was." Mrs. Price said, "We too are looking forward with joy to soon joining them." That day all were busy in making preparations for their anticipated journey, for they had determined to try and escape to the hills and there hide. We heard afterwards this plan was never carried out. On August 4th we bade farewell to our friends and started for our home in the north of Shansi. We stayed for two days at the home of my cousin's father-in-law and then went on to Taiyuenfu where we saw many heads fastened on cages to the city wall outside the north gate. We arrived at Hsincheo on August 12th and heard that some foreigners had been killed there a few days before. Further north we found that the mission premises had been burnt at Kwohsien, as also at Pansih sien where not a few Christians had been killed, some of whom had been burned alive. On August 16th we arrived at home to the astonishment of all our friends as they thought we must surely have been killed. On September 3rd my cousin's father-in-law arrived and brought the sad intelligence that the foreigners at Pencheofu had been massacred. He also said he had heard you were at Peking and Paotingfu, and we then lost no time in coming to see you and hand over the letter which Mr. Clapp had entrusted to my care.

DIARY LETTER OF MR. CLAPP OF THE
AMERICAN BOARD MISSION.

Tai-Ku, July 5th, 12.30 a.m.

Dear Ones at Home, — Doubtless you have heard through the papers of the appearance of the society known as the "Boxers," in North China, and of their depredations and crimes around the capital and Tientsin; you

know far more than we do about that for we have had no news direct from Tientsin for more than a month, and it has been so long since those events occurred you have probably forgotten all about it. However, we have not, and I fear it will be a long time before we do. The success of their movements (the Boxers) has encouraged the staid and patient people of Shansi to do something too, so they have begun their hateful work here. The officials are ordered by the Empress to protect foreigners and the Church, but they are not to hurt the Boxers!! This of course is just what such men want, let them alone and they will hurt no one but bad men, but all christians are bad men and must be punished! Hence they go about killing, pillaging and spreading a reign of terror—and that is what they are doing now. Several mission-stations have been sacked and burned and among them Dr. Edwards' fine house in Taiyuenfu and one lady, Miss Coombs perished in the flames! The rest of the Taiyuenfu people are practically prisoners in the house of Mr. Farthing not being allowed to go out or in, the doors being sealed and closely guarded by Chinese soldiers. We have sent a man up to find out about it if possible, but fear he will not bring back any definite word. Ren-tsuen was sacked last Sunday July 1st. Davis had left the day before and came to the city and Sunday morning very early we came to the city with a load of goods and are now barricaded in our own house! We had to leave the beautiful new house because we feared we could not trust the "Kuan" (official) but the house is not burned yet and the probability is it won't be though it is reported that the 15th of the 6th moon is the time for burning it and killing the foreigners (i. e. July 11th). Before this reaches you (if it ever does) long enough, you may hear of the destruction of all of us, but we hope not. Quite a good many of our people are with us and we are keeping strict watch night and day. I am on watch now, but it is time to call my relief and I will stop till I am not so sleepy.

July 5th 11.30 a.m. Word has just been received from Fen-Cheo-fu that a C.I.M. station ten miles from Fen-Cheo-fu has been destroyed and two ladies killed. This may be our fate in a few days, but if so praise God we shall soon be beyond the need of help or hurt. We can't communicate with the coast as the roads and telegraph lines are in the hands of our enemies. We are trying to form some plan to get word to the consul or minister, but I don't know as we can. We shall sell our lives as dearly as possible. We believe in the doctrine, "Trust in the Lord and keep the powder dry." Our servants are leaving us to some extent, but the defection is not great yet. The Christians seem loyal to a good degree, for which we thank God. You will know before this reaches you whether we survive or perish. We have hope that the Lord will exert his saving power. I never thought of posing as a martyr, but I am willing to give my life for China if necessary, for I feel as sure as that I live at all that "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" and that if we perish it will be the starting of a better and more enduring church than any that we shall build, or more truly, that God can build through us.

I am greatly surprised and gratified that dear Jennie is so brave and cool in this hour of danger, for she is naturally so timid and fearful of slight dangers, that I feared she would be dreadfully frightened but she is calmer even than I. Davis and Williams are both cool-headed and I believe will fight for life like troopers. If we are attacked somebody besides foreigners will be killed.

July 6th. Last night one of the boys who was watching heard something on the street which he thought was conspirators planning an attack, or was meant to be a signal to fire the new house, and a woman on the place half wild with fright ran upstairs where the ladies were sleeping and said they had better get down for a crowd was gathering on the street and it might mean business. It was wholly imagination, but it was enough to make the

ladies hurry to get down and dear Jennie fell from top to bottom—spraining one ankle badly and cutting a gash under the arm 3 inches long and an inch deep—besides other bruises. We hope it will not prove very serious, but it is getting to be very hot and it will be very hard to be in bed so long—especially as we have few conveniences for making her comfortable. We trust however this condition will not last long. It will culminate ere long, I think. The ladies are very kind in taking care of her. Of course I have to take my turn on the watch and sleep a little—though it is little I get now—but I try to help her what I can. It may be fortunate, for she had quite an idea of trying to escape to the Yamen if we come to a fracas and that would mean death in the most horrible way. Now she can't walk and may be it will be her salvation after all, though of course it is hard to bear now.

Since writing yesterday we have heard that the Pigotts at Shou-yang had been burned out and fled to a village where there were Christians but the other villagers would not allow them to remain even over one night. Then one of the Christians said he would lead them to another village where they certainly would be received, but they were not. Then they decided to go back to the city and throw themselves on the mercy of the official, but before they reached there they were stopped and could not proceed. They then took to the mountains but where they are no one knows. Probably they will perish if they have not already. Two of Atwater's children were with them. They had a small school for missionary children, this is the reason for their being there.

Mr. and Mrs. Saunders of Ping-yao with four children, a single man and a single lady were fleeing in the mountains to the south of us. When last heard from they were driven out of Ping-yao and their house burned, and went towards Taiyuenfu. Before they reached there they heard of the terrible disaster there, turned back and decided to take to the hills, where the

people are less excited. They got to Hsukou 10 miles from here and there tried to get an official escort but could not. They then hired two soldiers to escort them to a place of safety. After going a day's journey they refused to go further without more pay. He sent to us for money and we sent him 32 taels (ounces) of silver. He said in his note that he would send it back from "South Pass," 20 miles further on, as he could get money there. But we have not yet heard from him and we fear they have all perished. All this is serious business for poor China! But in the end it will be for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. Of this I feel sure. I have believed for many years that Satan would stir up a great persecution for China one of these days and it is coming now. It is a time of testing and sifting too. The Boxers are making havoc among those who are not and have never pretended to be Christians. They catch a man whom they suspect of being in the employ of foreigners and engaged in poisoning wells, and hack him to pieces and burn his body in the temple before the gods.

Later.—Word has just come that the city magistrate has issued a proclamation forbidding the wild, seditious talk of the last few days, and the practice of the Boxer manœuvres in the city and about. It may be only a local affair to quell the almost universal terror that has existed here for several days. We hope and believe it is the hand of the Lord to help us and the poor people. We will hope in His Mercy still. Courier just in from Fenchoufu and he reports they are still alive and well and have hopes that the worst is over. "We will be glad and rejoice all our days." Rain has come and the farmers are at work. We hope yet that news of the troubles here will not have reached you so as to make you worry. None of us have undressed for about a week. Will write a word more before this leaves.

With love to all.

(Signed) HOWARD.

July 7th, 3 a.m.—On watch again, and as all is quiet will write.

Yesterday our man returned from T'ai-yuenfu. His report is about the same as that I have already written. He was allowed to go in and see the friends, and I had a half-hour's talk with him. He says Miss Coombs was first knocked down by one of the rioters and then thrown into the burning house. When the friends started from their burning home a crowd gathered around and expected to crush the whole lot, but a few pistol shots from the foreigners which laid out four of the leaders, opened the crowd and they passed on. Why they went to Mr. Farthing's instead of the Yamen I don't know. They said they could not send letters as it would only make matters worse and endanger his life as well as their own. Mr. Farthing did however write a cablegram on a very small bit of paper which our man concealed on his person so it was not taken from him. This we have sent with a letter to our Consul by a man hired to go. We have promised him a liberal reward if he gets through. But it is probable our fate will be settled long ere this can get to Tientsin.

July 9th, 2.15 a.m.—Nothing of importance has happened to us since the last date. The official put out a new proclamation yesterday saying that the men arrested the day before and punished were not the real Boxers but were false, and that all such must stop practising, and if they did any damage they would be severely dealt with. As intimated above four men from a village three miles from the city, who had been engaged in riotous work, were arrested and punished with 1,200 heavy blows with a bamboo stick. As near as I could get at the story it was about as follows: In the village referred to a company of young men had organized, and were practising the manœuvres peculiar to their order. On Friday night July 6th they seized a man whom they accused of poisoning wells with foreign medicine. (No proof whatever, but that was the charge. Probably there was an old grudge between the man and some one or more of the Box-

ers). They dragged the man to the town official and demanded his instant execution. The man said he had no power to take life, but would punish the man, which he proceeded to do most cruelly. Meanwhile the Boxers burned the man's house and as they were not satisfied they brought the man to the city, and demanded the city magistrate to execute the poor fellow. The official refused to do it and let the man go. They went home very mad. Saturday afternoon four of the bravest of them marched into the city at the south gate (not far from our house) and began knocking people over and making every one whom they met kneel and bump their heads on the ground. They bragged that they were the rightful officers and were on the way to the Yamen to take command of the city. They might have been allowed to proceed with this shameful affair but for the fact that one of the men whom they struck was a trusty servant of one of the rich men in the city. The affair was reported to the magistrate at once and he sent soldiers at once to arrest the men and take them to the Yamen which was done and they were punished as stated above. One of the boasts of the Boxers is that they are invulnerable, nothing can hurt them after they have once mastered their art. One of the fellows was arrested right by our house and the soldiers who arrested him cudgelled him well, and the poor fellow howled most lustily. It was a good thing for the people. Many of them have come to believe that their claim is true, and no one dared touch the lawless scoundrels. Many people who pretend to be educated and are intelligent generally believe that this movement has the spirit of the gods in it and that they (i.e. the gods) are taking revenge on the people for forsaking them and turning to the one God whom the Christians preach. Yesterday morning (Sunday) we heard of the murder of one of our Tung-fang Christians. He was a very poor man, but had the reputation of being bold and fearless. Most of the Tung-fang Christians are here, but he

could not come on account of a few sheep which he kept, and which would be left with (out) any shepherd if he came away. He said he was not afraid for he did not think the Boxers would attack him. He had a little land which he worked, that with his sheep supported his family. But the poor man was attacked by a whole gang of these wretches and literally hacked to pieces! So has died the first martyr of T'aiiku church.

Yesterday morning early two of our Christians started for "Why Lo" (Hwailuh) a station of the C.I.M. 180 miles from here on the way to Paoting Fu. The day before our coast courier returned without letters saying he could not get through to Paoting Fu. He also brought a letter from Mr. Green stationed at "Why Lo" which said he was trying to get a secret communication through to the coast and he hoped he should succeed. We sent telegrams to the English and American Consuls at Tientsin apprising them of the danger to foreigners here and if the Lord prospers the undertaking, we may hope to get out of this ere long. At present there (are) about fifty foreigners imprisoned in this part of the province either in their own houses or in the "Yamens" and unable to move, and their money nearly gone! We are better off than most of the others for we happened (or was it not rather our Father's planning for us) to have an unusually large amount in the bank here, so we have not suffered much. We have about 35 of our people with us and whom we have to feed which cost us several dollars a day, and this will soon use up our funds. But we hope we shall be succoured ere that comes. Of course we shall have to get more money some way to go on with our work, but I believe if the Lord mean to keep us here he will supply the needs so I don't worry about that. I think we shall hear from the coast before many days and the situation will be relieved.

Monday, July 9th. Nothing of importance happened to-day. Had the particulars of Mr. Au's death, the Christian in Tung-fang who was mur-

dered. He took his two little sheep out to the pasture and about 30 men and boys pounced upon him and cut him to pieces, and afterwards burned the body. We also heard that in a large market town eight miles from here the Boxers got to fighting among themselves and one man was killed. At any rate we know the magistrate went there to attend to the case and this story is reported since his return. If true it will do much to quell the disturbance. The devil usually overshoots himself and I guess he has done it now. For the people have become afraid of their own weapon which has turned against themselves. They were willing to egg on and encourage this Satanic movement and rejoiced when Christians were seized, beaten and killed and their property destroyed, but they are learning that they can't play with fire without getting burnt. One is forcibly reminded of Psalm 87, 15.—“Their sword shall enter their own heart and their bows shall be broken.” “My soul wait thou only on the Lord for expectation is from him.”

July 11th. Yesterday I forgot to make my usual entry. Nothing of much importance occurred. More reports of disturbances among the Boxers themselves, which is a good thing for us. No news from the outside world. One man who had lately broken off opium with us came in. . . . claimed to have been driven out of his place. . . . but believe he is a hypocrite. . . . P.M. We are told that the official is becoming alarmed at the condition of things and has to-day sent out men to arrest leaders of the Boxers in various villages. This will be a good thing for us. I hope the worst is over. It will be some time before we can leave the (city) place, but it will pass away some time. We shall fear to move till we get official permission. The weather still continues very hot and dry. Another good rain would do much to settle matters. *Later.* Reports have reached us through the outside natives as well as the underlings in the Yamen that all the foreigners and a good number of Chinese were massacred on July 15th, and that the R. C. Cathedral

in T'ai-yuenfu has been burned. It is said that they had moved from the house of one of the missionaries to a large court back of one of the official residences, and that the governor sent for them to come to his office and they were slaughtered on the way. A suggestion has come to us through a friend, said to be sent by the chief of police of the city, for us to withdraw a few miles from the city to the hills and wait there till the danger is past, but it looks too much like a trick to get us out of our protected house, so we have decided to pay no attention to it. It will be no harder to die here on our own premises than in the hills and, unless God intervenes, very soon we are doomed to destruction anyhow. This probably will never reach you so there is little use to write. The student whom we have been supporting in Tung Chow is here with us but his friends are using every means to get him away from here. To-day his sister came and says the boy must go home with her to-night, and that means that they (among whom is his father) will forcibly retain him there. As he is imminently in danger of being killed if he stays here and to go to them would ensure personal safety for a time, it is very hard for him to decide to remain. May God help him to be true to his Saviour is all we can ask.

July 13th, 3 a.m. Our men came to us late last night and said that word had been certainly sent to the magistrate here to destroy us on July 20th,—i.e. all foreigners and the Christians found with them—so our fate seems fixed and several of our people are leaving. The school teacher . . . assistants and their families are preparing to leave this a.m. I want them to take this letter and mail it if they ever reach a place of safety. We heard from those who fled from Ping-yao two weeks ago. They have perished in the mountains probably. The man who came to us from them July 1st and has come back says they had gone on south from Lucheng and were attacked by a band of robbers who took all they had, and they went on a few miles further and were attacked again and

