

A Missionary Tour in China.

VISIT TO PANG-KHAU, SIN-HII, KICH-YANG, AND MI-OW.

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THE following interesting narrative of a journey into the country about Swatow has been addressed by Miss Ricketts to the friends of the gospel in China in Edinburgh, and in Scotland generally, who had the privilege of meeting with her before she set sail in August last. Miss R. has gone out to labour in the Swatow Mission, especially in training native Chinese for service as Bible women, for which her long experience in educational and in Christian work amongst the women of Brighton has admirably qualified her :—

SWATOW, *1st January 1879.*

I made my first visit to the country stations in company with our dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Mackenzie, and their little son Charlie. We had arranged to start on Wednesday, December 18th ; but journeys in China cannot be undertaken with the same ease and despatch as in England ; and we learn here very fully to realize the meaning of *D.V.*, for every journey waits upon wind and tide ; and though we had fixed the day, when ten o'clock arrived the wind and tide were such that we could not go. But at twelve o'clock the weather improved, and we started off, after taking leave of our friends at the garden gate. Our luggage consisted of two black bags for clothes, tin boxes for books, paper, and ink, and two large squares of matting, in which our sheets, blankets, and pillows were rolled up and tied with rope. Some tins of preserved soup and meat were packed in baskets, bread for five days—as no bread can be obtained in the country—a few bananas and oranges, tea and coffee, and some preserved ginger completed our provisions, together with a cake of Mrs. Mackenzie's making.

The boat in which all the mission journeys by water are made is more like a large canal barge than anything else I have seen in the way of boats. The cabin is too low for any one to stand upright in it, and its length and breadth are about the size of two-thirds of an ordinary first-class railway carriage. It has four tiny square port-holes, with a green shutter outside each; and the heat in summer must be perfectly stifling, seeing that it became excessively hot even with the bright rays of the December sun. Three steps bring the passenger up on to the deck, where it is just possible to place two small flap-chairs behind the steersman, whose rudder is of the most primitive description. The captain, who is called in Chinese Tai-kong, does not look superior to the other boatmen. Our Tai-kong wears a dark blue cotton tunic and short trousers, not reaching beyond the knee, of a yellowish white cotton; below, his legs and feet are bare; often he stands up and steers with his foot, holding the rudder by his toes. On his head a blue cotton towel is wound round in turban guise, and harmonizes well with his rough weather-beaten face. We have to grope our way along by the garden wall to the corner where the boat is lying; and after much pushing and a great deal of grunting and a cross fire of talking, the boat gets out of the mud and fairly out to sea by 12.30. At one o'clock we have to ease anchor and wait for an hour, during which time we had dinner; and about two o'clock, dinner over, a fair wind blew, the Tai-kong at once hoisted the bats-wing-like sail, and the boat made good progress over the glittering waters. The first sight that struck me was one that at once carried my mind away to the lake of sacred memories in the land of Palestine. About twenty boats were gathered in a large semicircle, and on each of them a stalwart, lithe, bronzed fisherman was standing with a net skilfully gathered on his arm, ready at a signal agreed upon to throw it out upon the water. Presently the signal was given, and all the nets appeared to fly out upon the quiet sea and sweep down into its blue depths for the living treasure below. In a few minutes the nets were hauled in, and they had in many cases 'inclosed a great multitude of fishes.' The whole scene was just a graphic picture of Luke v., even down to washing the nets, and

beckoning to a friend for help; and my mind turned at once to Jesus and His frequent lake journeys among similar surroundings, and probably in a boat very much of the same build as these. It was a thought of peace and comfort, for He who lived so much among the fishermen still loves and cares for them, and is sending after them His blessed gospel to draw them out of the waters of death into a new and higher life. The day wore on, and we had not yet reached the river when the sun set, and the air began to be very chill. We sang some hymns as the twilight deepened—‘Jerusalem the Golden,’ and ‘The Lifeboat.’ The chorus of the latter hymn rang out cheerily on the silent air, and was inspiring in the death-like lonely stretches of river, rock, and shore, over which there seemed to brood the dark wings of the spirit of heathenism.

On the distant hills we suddenly spied a great fire, that increased until it assumed the aspect of a monster fire-dragon trailing its burning length over the lovely mist-covered mountains. We found it necessary now to go down into the cabin; and Mr. Mackenzie read aloud to us some of dear Dr. Hamilton’s sermons, which were delightful in the circumstances in which we found ourselves. One of his happy expressions, I remember, was ‘The fadeless summer of the soul.’ Oh may that heavenly season abide with you at home and with us here, enfolding us all in its shining light and genial warmth!

At eight o’clock we landed in the dark, and with two lanterns made our way to the chapel, where we were to sleep. One of the boatmen carried Charlie, and his bed was first made ready. The room to be occupied by Mrs. Mackenzie and myself had nothing whatever in it but a bench. I was naturally a little curious as to where and what our bed was going to be; and while I was musing, the old chapel-keeper (I beg pardon, church-officer!) entered and saluted me with ‘Peace,’ commencing at the same time to arrange the bed, which consisted of two tressels and six wooden planks laid upon them. He set up four forked sticks to hold the mosquito curtain, and then we commenced to make the bed. I believe I was too much overcome with laughter to do much but give the distinguished help of looking on. We laid down the mat,

two blankets, and some of our wraps, and then put a sheet over all, and the pillows rather far in, that they might not roll out backwards. When all was finished we had worship, and retired to rest. After a time I ventured to inquire if Mrs. Mackenzie was asleep, and was answered in the negative. I believe, however, that we did contrive to secure a series of light and not altogether unrefreshing slumbers. Altogether I have come to the conclusion that sleeping on boards is not so bad as it sounds, and probably custom would enable me to sleep well upon any Chinese bed of this description. No rats visited us; and we were not disturbed by any kind of animate life, to our great comfort. We rose early next morning, and were scarcely dressed when one old woman who had slept in the chapel all night appeared. Mrs. Mackenzie bowed her out politely, and we gathered together for breakfast. Long before we had finished, the good people were peering through the doors, stumbling over each other in their eager curiosity to see the foreign ladies. We hastened our meal and went into the chapel, that they might not grow too impatient. After chatting with little knots of them, Mr. Mackenzie came in and spoke to them for about three-quarters of an hour. A number of heathen came in and were very talkative, and interested in the foreign people. With some difficulty Mrs. Mackenzie and I escaped into the bedroom, taking with us a young married woman who had been a scholar in the girls' school at Swatow. Her name is Titsich, and she is married into a heathen family, where she finds it very hard to live a Christian life. She is a pretty, bright girl of about nineteen, but seemed to be much cast down. Mrs. Mackenzie had a nice opportunity of comforting and strengthening her in her weakness; and I thought she looked brighter before we left. She seemed to wish us to stay, and indeed we could have found plenty of work to keep us at each station; but time pressed, and we had to leave poor Titsich, commending her to God's loving care, and praying that she might have grace to hold 'the beginning of her confidence stedfast unto the end.'

Our bundles being all packed by the men while we were in the chapel, we set out again about ten o'clock for Kichyang, the district city. The morning was exquisite; the

sky intensely blue, and everywhere along the banks of the river square patches of sugar-cane growing and sending out its bright green pennants to wave in the slight breeze, which rustled too gently to fill our sails. Over one small stream I saw a bridge from which the celebrated bridge of the willow pattern plate might have been sketched. Two people were walking over it, which made the likeness still more observable. The villages along the river banks are countless; and as we thought in how few any gospel light was burning, it saddened us while making us feel thankful to be carrying it near to them. We sang 'From Greenland's Icy Mountains,' and never did its winged words penetrate my heart as they did while passing those thousands of benighted homes. It is in vain that I write the words; they mean nothing to you at home, you cannot realize the dense masses, and you cannot tell what it is to be a single reaper in a hundred miles of living corn. There are no heaven-pointing spires in all this terrestrial beauty; no praise arises from the midst of these exquisite plains to Him who gives 'rain and fruitful seasons,' 'joy and gladness;' no hearts beat with love to the Heavenly Father; no schools summon the children to learn how to make the best of both worlds; but instead, there are literally idols under every green tree, life is a dull uninspired routine of seeking after food and raiment, and the chief religious sentiment is fear of some powerful idol or spirit being angry. The learning of the schools is monotonous and unfruitful as regards the development of the whole being. The whole of this great empire waits for Christianity to breathe upon its state of heavy sleep, that life may come to the stiff limbs and power to the nation, so long fettered and enfeebled by ignorance and heathenism.

We arrived at Kich-yang about one o'clock, and dined in the boat, going on shore just after two o'clock. Mr. Mackenzie ordered chairs for us both, as we had to go some distance through the town. Two native preachers met us, and Khai-liu walked by Mrs. Mackenzie's chair and Mr. Mackenzie stayed by mine, as I could not speak or understand the native brother, whereas Mr. Mackenzie is perfectly able to hold lengthened conversations with any one in the language. The town consists of narrow lanes

of what we should call street-stalls, only they are just covered in and made in great measure of bamboo and straw. I had lowered the fine bamboo mat in front of my chair, but a small opening was left on each side, and the shopkeepers gazed curiously in and wondered what sort of curious being they would see. Arrived at the chapel, a large crowd had gathered about the door, and Mr. Mackenzie hurried me in, to the endangering of a dog who was lying just in my road; and quickly shutting the door, led the way to the room we were to occupy for the night. In this room was a high table, also some forms and the usual tressels and boards; a lath and paper screen, with a wooden door, divided our room from that occupied by Mr. Mackenzie and little Charlie. Our room was used as the sitting-room. Several of the Chinese sisters had arrived to meet us, and they all presented us with fresh oranges and eggs coloured and white. It is the fashion to take one or two and leave the rest, but many of them insisted on our taking all they had brought; in particular, the chapel-keeper's wife, who brought twelve and would not hear of taking one back; so we kept for the remainder of the week a sort of peripatetic greengrocer's stall. I cannot describe the less agreeable odours of this chapel ground. The bottle of salts was a faithful sentinel at the gate of smelling. We had no place to walk in but a little paved court about the size of an east-end cottage room, and about as bad for its evil smell, though open to lovely heaven. The place had been a pawnbroker's shop, and it is haunted by numberless four-footed creatures, whose presence does not add to the cleanliness or fragrance of the rooms. All night these creatures were madly scrambling to and fro; and I had just fallen into a quiet sleep when one of them rushed behind my head outside the mosquito curtain, happily, and I woke with a start that made all the bed creak, and an exclamation that startled my neighbours into kind inquiries as to my cause of alarm. After this the morning began to break and the creatures retired to their holes, and we had some sleep. Before we retired to rest Mr. Mackenzie held two services with the people, and in both I said a few words with his kind interpretation. After evening prayer the ancient chapel-keeper's wife came for a little help and counsel. She was

much troubled by her temper, and pointing to her husband said, 'I am always flying out at him, but I do pray for the Holy Spirit, and yet I cannot keep down my temper.' It was a great delight to hear this sorrow and grief about sin, expressed by one who had been formerly sunk in the night of ignorance, and it was perfectly genuine. The tears stood in the woman's eyes, as I have often seen them stand in women's eyes at home when they have been grieving over some besetting sin. I asked Mr. Mackenzie to tell her about the storm on the lake and the hushing of the wild tempest by the voice of Jesus; and he explained to her that her anger was like the raging sea, and while she would be helpless, the Lord could make a great calm in her spirit, and still all its tumult and heaving bitterness. She very quickly grasped the idea, and I trust it may prove helpful to her when next she feels provoked with her husband. Mr. Mackenzie tells me that a *deep* sense of sin is very rare among native Christians. In some, as in this woman, it grows, and is certainly one of the most evident proofs of the real entrance of God's own light into the soul. The old woman related the story, so well known at home, of the girl's prayers, 'Show me myself,' and 'Show me Thyself,' and she said she was always asking God to show her herself. No doubt but that her conviction of sin was an answer to that prayer. I shall watch with much interest the work of the Lord in the sanctification of this soul for whom Christ died.

Several of the sisters had slept in the chapel over night, and were at worship in the early morning. The chapel has an uneven brick floor, some bamboo chairs round it in rows, and a tiny raised platform, with a table upon it; it is lighted by a little elevated saucer filled with oil, and having a wick floating in it, which is lit at one end. The effect is weird in the extreme. The curious old figures flitting about in the shadowy corners, and the strange sound of familiar hymn tunes issuing from such peculiar-looking people, all combine to make one feel as though walking in a dream. A curious object struck me which I was at a loss to make out for a while; it was a jar suspended by a string, and a little way above the jar a large tile. I ascertained that the jar contained oil, and that it was hung up to be out of the reach of rats

from the floor, while the tile kept off the little thieves from above. The time came for us to leave Kich-yang, and several of the old women with tearful eyes made their farewells to Mrs. Mackenzie, and begged her most earnestly to come again soon. Her presence among them was, as far as I could judge, a real comfort; and they experienced a sense of loss and blank with her departure. A very pleasant-looking native preacher came in, whom I recognised as having been at the conference in Swatow; both he and Khai-liu walked with us through the town to the boat. The people were very civil to us. I always smiled if I saw any one looking in a dubious state of mind, and in almost every instance the smile was returned. We heard nothing about 'foreign devils;' the only observation made was 'there go the worshippers of God.' Little Charlie was a great source of admiring wonder, of which he, dear little child, was quite unconscious.

Presently we left the town, and the ill odours behind, and struck out into the open fields. The morning air blew fresh and sweet, as we walked on the narrow raised track through the rice-fields and sugar-cane blocks. The Chinese fields are very small, and divided by little elevations of earth in place of our own pretty hedges or more substantial stone walls. I paced one of the largest fields, and 123 of my steps measured its length. I imagine about forty would have sufficed for the breadth. I noticed here, as in Swatow, the culture of every available spot of ground. We passed one spot where some very poor persons were buried, and the coffins were in many cases quite visible; they are only made of the trunks of trees hollowed out, and some had split open, as well as appeared through the ground. It was a heathen burial ground, and no sacred thoughts invested the dust of the departed with claims on the tender reverence of the living. Though the Chinese worship their dead, they frequently endeavour to cheat them, as I had plain evidence yesterday, for instead of putting gilded and silvered paper on the graves, nearly all of them are stuck over with common bits of paper. I enclose one silvered bit, that the wind had carried away, for I could not bring myself to desecrate their graves by touching what they had laid there, though in ignorance. I only saw about four silvered

papers, while the white ones could not be counted. Perhaps I should mention that the paper is supposed to be coin that will circulate in the spirit-world, and preserve the departed in a condition of comfort and affluence there.

We reached Sin-hii at one o'clock. After the boat had twice grounded, owing to the shallow condition of the water, we were obliged to leave the mission boat and get into a native one of shallower build; by this means we were able to effect a good landing. The sun was blazing out, and it was a question whether we could get to Sin-hii without some considerable fatigue with the heat. Mrs. Mackenzie had set her heart on seeing the women there, and I was not going to be outdone by her; so we started out over the fields by a raised stone path. Skirting in one place a pleasant hill, we passed some pretty bits of rock and fern, which I would fain have gathered, but did not dare linger in the heat. About a quarter of a mile from the village, while I was looking down at the ferns and grass, I heard a pleasant voice say, 'Peace!' and looking up saw a beaming face that was quite worth a hot walk to look at; and I recognised a Chinese sister who had been at the conference, and had then excited my interest by her happy-looking, intelligent face.

Sui-so next greeted Mrs. Mackenzie warmly, and led the way to her village with great delight. Presently we reached chapel, which was filled to overflowing in every part. This chapel is a large room holding about 100, seated and quite open in front, with some trees growing on the other side of a wall opposite. At the end facing the open front is a little railed platform and desk. We were tired and hot, but had to squeeze through the curious people to the platform, and talk a little with the people; but they pressed round so much that we escaped to a tiny room, with no window, behind the platform, and saw a few of the sisters at a time. Sui-so had provided a feast for us of eggs and rice, made to look like white sugar plumes; it was very sweet, and I could not swallow anything but the yolk of the eggs. We all managed to eat some; but the good sisters were greatly distressed that we took so little. Being a little rested we all came out, and by this time a whole flock of heathen had assembled,

and were even sitting on the trees opposite, not in eagerness to hear the gospel, I grieve to know, but in curiosity to see foreign ladies and a foreign child. Mr. Mackenzie spoke, and was listened to with deep attention by the church members, though it was painful to speak in such an uproar. The heathen kept making remarks, and the dear good Christians, in their anxiety to secure quiet, made a great deal of extra noise, as is often done by overzealous folk at home in schools and meetings. Mr. Mackenzie asked me to say a few words to them, and I felt very glad to do so, for there seemed to be quite a spirit of life in that little gathering. The heathen subsided into comparative silence, perhaps to listen for a moment what it was that a woman could possibly be talking about; and as I spoke only a few moments, I had their attention, and also quiet in which to be heard by the women of the church.

Just twelve people followed us to the boat, among them one of the first converts, a poor aged woman, who has endured much persecution for the truth's sake. As they all followed they seemed eagerly conversing, and I was curious to know what they were speaking of. You will be glad to hear that they were exhorting one another, and really speaking to each other for good to edification. Might we not learn something from them? I could not help remembering how many profitless conversations I had held after hearing the word! Sin-so was leading the way, and talking to the dear teacher's lady (as they call the missionaries' wives) about a woman to whom she had said she had 'preached thousands and thousands of the doctrine,' and for whom she prayed that the Lord would open her heart to receive it. Sin-hii became a station about twelve years ago, and the first converts were the above-mentioned woman, and another woman, a leper; both of these died in the faith. We embarked once more in the little open boat, and proceeded to Tie-lai-kong, near where we were to meet the mission boat and sleep for the night on the river.

The scenery on this part of the river was exquisite. Everywhere the bamboo bent its feathery branches to the evening breeze, and the orange groves were laden with the bright yellow fruit. Other trees of rich foliage skirted the margin of the river; and as it wound its tortuous way

through this beautiful country, we all longed to be able to send it home for you to see. This we cannot do; but how glad we should be to show it to you if you would come and take a sail in our boat! At one village which we passed, beautifully situated on the left bank of the river, about thirty children rushed along to look at us, crying as they ran, 'See the foreign child.' Soon after this the night came on, and we anchored in a convenient little creek, opposite to a lime-kiln. Mr. Mackenzie slept in the open boat, and we took Charlie under cover. We did not sleep very much, but then there were not any rats. Very early in the morning I heard a sound which I had learned in Japan to identify with idol worship, *i.e.*, the tones of a very softly-struck gong. Mrs. Mackenzie called to our Tai-kong to ask what was going on, and he answered shortly, 'They are worshipping the devil.' It made my very heart sick when he said it, but I found he only intended by his speech that the villagers were 'worshipping idols;' in any case it was sad enough, and reminded me of the apostle's words, 'The things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils.' There were hundreds of people in this place, and there are no Christians near them; and you see how little can be accomplished by us, owing to the great distances, and the time taken by the slow travelling of a boat propelled the greater part of the time by oarsmen. I saw the harvest waiting with my own eyes, but where are the Saxon reapers?

The cabin is rather like the bed of Procrustes, and we could not manage to wash, scarcely to dress; so a wooden bowl was brought to us on deck, and we washed our faces in sight of the admiring village, who were exceedingly interested in all the process. After breakfast we landed, as the next part of our journey had to be performed in chairs, and the people then swarmed round us. About twenty of them peered over into my chair, and one child, with a very scared look, ventured to touch my hand, to see, I suppose, what I was made of. I patted his cheek and smiled at him, and then all the crowd laughed and chattered. Just then the chair-bearers made a few motions in the air, and a few grunts cleared them off; and then, lifting me up, most valiantly trotted off. It was ten

o'clock when we started, and we did not reach Mi-ow until 1.15 o'clock. Mrs. Mackenzie had a long conversation with her bearers. They asked her many questions about 'the land of her ancestors,' were much surprised to find that rice did not grow there, wondered what our people lived upon, and asked if we did business or cultivated fields in our country. You will smile at these questions, no doubt, as she did, but it shows the depths of their ignorance about anything beyond their own village life, their rice, their work, their idols, and their feuds.

We walked part of the way to rest the men; and at one place, where we stopped to rest, we bought some oranges and gave them each one, for which they were very grateful. Twelve oranges only cost twopence, and were most refreshing in the heat of the sun. Not very far from Mi-ow are two hills almost covered with graves; and here and there a little stone, erected to the Spirit of the Earth, tells of a god 'ignorantly' worshipped. The graves are all green mounds, with a stone at the foot bearing the name of the deceased, and the dynasty under which he died.

Arrived at the village of Mi-ow, we stepped into our chairs, and so escaped without much notice to the chapel. The room we occupied here was rather better than the others, being larger and fresher, though the chapel was much of the same character as at Kich-yang, only more airy. A great feast was appointed for the Sabbath, so we hoped for a quiet season in the service, and the people were all much engaged in preparation on the Sabbath. A great many women came to visit us here, and brought the usual presents of eggs and oranges, with sugar-cane for Charlie, who relished this natural sweetmeat to the full. How our little home children would rejoice in a land where sugar-sticks actually grow on all sides! It is very common to see a Chinaman, with a staff of sugar-cane, regaling himself by eating the top of it as he walks along, gnawing it in very canine fashion.

We received a visit here from another of the old school girls, Hok Chhen (Star of Happiness), and her husband; they seemed to be much attached to each other, and to have more of the freedom of husband and wife at home than is common with Chinese couples. Hok Chhen was

delighted to see Mrs. Mackenzie, to whom she is evidently very deeply indebted, and for whom she has a strong affection. A Kia, her husband, has just bought a new pretty tunic for his wife, and he put it over her shoulders to show us, with very pardonable pride; for he had no doubt worked hard to earn it for her. While I was writing I had to stop, and who should step in to visit me, this New Year's day, but the 'Star of Happiness' herself, come on a visit of a week or two to her dear Mrs. Mackenzie. At each of the stations I have seen girls who once were in the school; and it must be very delightful to the three ladies who have worked so much in the school, to see how their old scholars still cleave to the worship of God, and still put in practice the good lessons they learned in Swatow. None of these girls have their feet bound, and in many ways they are more civilised than other women; there is quite a different look about them as compared with their neighbours. All the afternoon, with a short interval, women came in for conversation. When the people were all gone, little Charlie sat on the chapel door-step playing with some dough, and making it into miniature cocks and hens. Several men gathered curiously about him; one remarked, 'He has thin hairs,' another thought his shoes and stockings very beautiful, and a good many remarks were passed upon his eyes, which are clear blue, and present a curious appearance to a Chinaman, who is always accustomed to dark eyes.

Sabbath morning, the first sound we heard was a hymn being sung by the members in their own prayer meeting. We rose at seven o'clock, and enjoyed the luxury of a tub of cold water in place of the minute basin that is used by the Chinese. Breakfast over, Mr. Mackenzie examined several applicants for the ordinance of baptism, and then (about 10.30) commenced the regular worship, and, as it was the season for communion, the chapel was very crowded. A small dark room, like some dingy back kitchen, is set apart for the women; behind two small gratings Mrs. Mackenzie and I sat with them, and about thirty-five were crammed into space fitted only for little more than half that number. Notwithstanding the attractions of the feast, a good many heathen had heard of the fame of the foreign ladies, and came in great numbers,

pressing outside. Several came to a grating at the back of the women's room, and some of the women were much offended. Some water stood for cooking their rice at the back of the room, and this two zealous sisters seized and threw at the men. Mr. Mackenzie, seeing their perturbation, spoke to them, and begged them to take no notice. The heathen round the chapel door were gathering thickly, many of them had pushed their way in, and Mr. Mackenzie was a little apprehensive of some rudeness, and not without reason, for he had been stoned some years ago on that very door-step, one stone striking him on the forehead, and cutting it badly, so that the blood ran down. We all prayed that there might be no disturbance, in order that the Christians might have a time of blessing and be refreshed in spirit at the Lord's table, spread here in 'presence of enemies' truly.

I remembered that prayer had been offered at home, and was perhaps in that very hour rising for us from some of the Lord's night watchers; and I felt a blessed assurance that no harm would befall us, and that the Christians would be able to enjoy quiet in their approach to God. And so it was; it seemed as if a spell was on the heathen tongues, for we were able to partake in quietness of that bread and that cup which so fitly show forth the dying love of Jesus for His people. It was a very strange feeling, to be partaking of those sacred elements with people of another race, and clime, and tongue; but it made me realize that heaven embraces all peoples, and that 'we, being many, are one bread and one body.' I felt nearer to the Chinese women as we partook together of the Lord's supper, and realized that we were, though differing in many outward circumstances, one in the faith that is able to save. The communion ended, Khai-lin preached very earnestly to the heathen, and so the service closed. Many of the women now came in to see us, and we all spoke a little to them; two of the women had walked six miles, and, not finding a boat, had waded across the river. I think that circumstance shows a real desire to hear the word of God. One poor old woman was glad of the opportunity to pour out her grief to Mrs. Mackenzie. She complained that her daughter-in-law frequently beat her when she went to prayer, and had

recently tried to suffocate her by fastening a rope fast round her waist, and pulling it very tightly. It seemed a real comfort to her to have sympathy and to be among Christians; and once or twice she stroked Mrs. Mackenzie's arm and said she was 'dear flesh.'

We paid one visit, close to the chapel, to the mother of Bu Seng, the preacher at Phu Sua. The room was about two yards long, and scarcely as broad, though very high, and without windows; it had one stool, and various things were hanging about,—one or two small home pictures in a very dirty condition. Behind was a room about the size of a ship cabin, having a good bedstead and mosquito curtain. The one praiseworthy feature was its perfect freedom from closeness or bad smell; and the little cups of tea that were handed to us were quite clean, and the tea as drinkable as tea can be without sugar and milk. The neighbouring houses looked terrible places, pigs were walking freely about, also cocks and hens strutting hither and thither. A number of women and children pressed in to the tiny space, and one was anxious to know what my pocket-book could be; so I took my pencil and wrote the character for man (A'-nang), which they at once recognised, and proceeded to talk very fast to me, until I told them I did not yet know their words. They said they would pray that I might 'quickly, quickly learn;' and many women in the stations, I believe, are really praying that I may soon be able to tell them in their own tongue the wonderful works of God.

We had dinner in our own room with great difficulty, a great crowd collected very eager to see us, and one wise woman brought a bamboo ladder and climbed up to the high window to look in at us. We were fairly imprisoned, and did not dare venture out to afternoon service. Mr. Mackenzie and Khai-lin took the service; and after Mr. Mackenzie came in the people grew very impatient, two wee stones were thrown in; I suspect to induce us to come to the window. At last, fearing they might become irritated, Mr. Mackenzie took his little boy and allowed them to see him, taking occasion to preach to them about the son of the great Father, and then, when the people were a little satisfied, he came in again to us.

Several young men meet always on Sabbath after

service to read the hymn-book together, and they read on with praiseworthy diligence for a long while. After evening worship, Mr. Mackenzie examined five other candidates for baptism. Two or three of them seemed really in earnest. Here are a few questions and answers: Has the devil ever tempted you? Yes. Are you afraid of him? I pray to God He will help me by His Holy Spirit. Are you stronger than the devil by yourself? No! (with strong emphasis). I am afraid of him. Of course this is just a fragment of an hour's catechising. There were twelve men in the room altogether, and eight sat round a table with Mr. Mackenzie, Mrs. Mackenzie and myself sitting at the upper part; in the centre a saucer of oil and wick to make darkness visible. We went afterwards to rest, very grateful to God for so much of His preserving and protecting care; and also glad to have seen many souls in whom His Spirit is working life and holiness.

We left in the native boats at nine o'clock, and did not reach Kich-yang until four o'clock in the afternoon,—the men pulling against wind and tide. We met the mission boat at this place, but were soon obliged to stop; and when we started again, the boat ran into some stakes that grated unpleasantly on the bottom of it, and we had some difficulty to get disentagled. We did so at last, and made the Pagoda about half-past seven. We anchored in a sheltered place, and early in the morning got into the little boat and rowed hard to reach Swatow before the tide turned. We arrived a little before twelve; and it was a real comfort to see our dear friends, to get their warm welcome, and to sit once more at a clean table in a clean airy house. I must hasten to bring this long, and I fear not very interesting, letter to a close. I can only say that I have told you, I think, everything that passed on the journey; so that you may realize as far as letter can help you what a journey to the country is like. I ask once more your special prayers for wisdom and quick life in my own heart, and trust that you will rejoice with us over this safe and happy journey, and over all that we saw and traced of God's working among these people to whom He has sent us with His messages of love and forgiveness.

C. M. RICKETTS.