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JOHN W. STEVENSON

ONE OF CHRIST'S STALWARTS



JOHN W. STEVENSON

*Frontispiece.*

# JOHN W. STEVENSON ONE OF CHRIST'S STALWARTS

WITH PORTRAITS  
AND ILLUSTRATIONS

By

MARSHALL BROOMHALL, M.A.

EDITORIAL SECRETARY, CHINA INLAND MISSION

FOREWORD BY

REV. NELSON BITTON

SECRETARY, LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY

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DEDICATED  
TO  
THE CHINA COUNCIL  
OF  
THE CHINA INLAND MISSION  
OF WHICH  
JOHN W. STEVENSON  
WAS AN ORIGINAL MEMBER

“THE only conclusive evidence of a man’s sincerity is that he give *himself* for a principle. Words, money, all things else are comparatively easy to give away; but when a man makes a gift of his daily life and practice, it is plain that the truth, whatever it may be, has taken possession of him. From that sincerity his words gain the force and pertinency of deeds, and his money is no longer the pale drudge ’twixt man and man, but, by a beautiful magic, what erewhile bore the image and superscription of Caesar seems now to bear the image and superscription of God.”

J. R. LOWELL.

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## FOREWORD

JOHN WHITEFORD STEVENSON of the China Inland Mission was a true Greatheart, one of God's good men. His valour was that of the consecrated soul which dares to put God to the test, and in unwavering faith "attempt great things for Him." He was one of the "pathfinders" of the Kingdom, as ready for adventure in a holy cause as any of the missionary pioneers whose record and message awakened the enthusiasm of his youth. So long as the records remain of those who blazed the trail for the Gospel message in China the name of J. W. Stevenson will be honoured and will live.

Not many men have been gifted with a more striking bodily appearance than he. His Chinese robes were worn with an ease and dignity which stirred the Chinese to involuntary compliment as he moved among them. Yet he was obviously free from all self-consciousness, both in matters of appearance and of accomplishment. Through many years of friendship I heard no word of boasting or self-gratulation regarding his remarkable travels,

and references to the unique experiences of his earlier days were invariably reminiscent, or offered by way of information. He "did not advertise."

Though not an emotional man, there were no barriers to his heart, and for that reason many of us, men of other missions, found in him abounding Christian sympathy and wise counsel. He was the brother of all who loved the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. In him gifts of body, mind, and soul accorded well, and gave him a place in that choice company whose vital presence and memory can never fade from the hearts of those who were their friends.

His "den," at the far end of the reposeful compound of the C.I.M. in Shanghai, was often enough a place of real retreat. There men gathered to talk over plans for the development of Christian missions in China. R.T.S. meetings, Bible commentary work, questions of mission comity, and similar matters, brought us together there, and revealed to us his charitable and wise judgement, sound knowledge, and willing heart. He rejoiced in service, and was withal "content to fill a little place" if God be glorified.

Far above all he was a man of God. He prayed as do those who know God as an unfailing Friend. Of surface piety he seemed to have little; the passing phrases of the day were not upon his lips; he was not much of a "Convention" man; but his

roots struck deep, and he knew "Whom he had believed." Therefore he was, far more than he was aware, the succourer of many, and a source of strength to youth struggling in Christian service.

Because he was that to one who was honoured in his friendship, and encouraged by his advice, I would offer this tribute of affection to his memory, and hope that this record of his life's work may be to those who read it the inspiration that the man himself was to me.

NELSON BITTON.

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

*February 1, 1919.*

# ONE OF CHRIST'S STALWARTS

As soon as Mr. Honest saw him he said, " I know this man." Then said Mr. Valiant-for-Truth, " Prithee, who is it ? " " 'Tis one," said he, " that comes from whereabouts I dwelt. His name is Standfast ; he is certainly a right good pilgrim ! "

BUNYAN.

## ONE OF CHRIST'S STALWARTS

When all have done their utmost, surely he  
Hath given the best who gives a character  
Erect and constant, which nor any shock  
Or loosened elements, nor the forceful sea  
Of flowing or of ebbing fates, can stir  
From its deep basis in the Living Rock.

J. R. LOWELL.

THERE are few more imposing scenes in history than that of Moses on the hill-top, supported by Aaron and Hur, pleading with God with uplifted hands, while Joshua, the warrior, engaged in deadly conflict with Amalek below. At that great crisis of a nation's life, when everything depended on the leader's prevailing power with God, we read of Moses that "his hands were steady until the going down of the sun." It is a magnificent and inspiring picture, with an application for all time.

For twenty years and more those words, "Steady until the going down of the sun," have hung as a motto on the walls of Mr. Stevenson's office in Shanghai. There at the headquarters of the China Inland Mission, where burdens and responsibilities too great for any unaided man to bear have pressed upon him as Deputy Director in the field, those

words have served as an ambition for life, until the man became the embodiment of his own ideal :

For longing moulds in clay, what life  
Carves in the marble Real.

Surveying from Shanghai, as from the mountain-top, the progress of the spiritual conflict throughout the length and breadth of China, he has been called upon to inspire by his example, as well as to guide and strengthen by counsel and encouragement, those engaged in the forefront of the battle. Through days of storm and stress, of riot and of martyrdom, as well as through periods of prosperity and success, the responsibilities and perplexities of his life as a director have been neither light nor few, and for such an office no quality has been more needed than the "crowning quality" of endurance. And endurance can well be written across the whole of Mr. Stevenson's career; a long and varied career, in which he has been "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord." It will be difficult indeed to imagine Shanghai without him, for not only has he been a central figure in the Mission's compound there, for more than thirty years, but he has been

A strength behind us making us feel bold  
In right.

When John W. Stevenson died in Shanghai in August 1918 he had the proud distinction of being the senior British missionary resident in China, and of holding the record for length of service in the ranks of the China Inland Mission, Mr. Hudson Taylor and Mr. Meadows not excepted. His full

and strenuous life included the founding of a flourishing church in East China, eight years of intrepid pioneer work in Burma, and more than thirty years of responsible administration as Deputy Director of the Mission in the field.

Tall in stature, broad in shoulder, upright in bearing, he was a fine specimen of manhood from youth to old age. Nor did his physical appearance belie the strength and resolution of his character, or his fortitude and courage in the bearing of heavy burdens and of serious responsibilities.

As deputy to Mr. Hudson Taylor for some fourteen years, and then to Mr. D. E. Hoste for the last eighteen years, he manifested without variation the same loyalty, and the same unswerving devotion to the cause to which he, as a young man, dedicated his manhood. Gifted with an accurate and powerful memory, he gained through his more than fifty years in China an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of missionary activities in the East, and thus became an invaluable colleague to the General Director. His mastery of facts was nothing less than surprising.

Little known beyond the China mission-field, for he never courted publicity or fame, his death has revealed, as perhaps nothing else could, how this quiet and reserved Scotsman, so "dumb for himself, unless it were to God," had gained the love and affection of those who had been brought into touch with him in the fellowship of the Gospel.

In a private letter to his widow, Mr. D. E. Hoste, who as General Director of the Mission had had special opportunities of knowing him, wrote :

"It has been my happy privilege to be closely

associated with him in the China administration of the Mission, and so I have been in a position to know something of his ministry, and the faithful steady courage with which he kept on in the path that, of necessity, was often a rough and difficult one.

“ His kindness, his patience, his friendship to myself are things I can hardly hope to know again in this life save as a treasured memory ; while to the practical lessons learned from him I owe more than can be estimated in exact terms.

“ It is the sober truth to say that, as the years have gone by, his place in the respect and affection of the Mission has become more and more assured.”

And another, the Rev. Nelson Bitton, now Secretary of the London Missionary Society, in acknowledging the tidings of Mr. Stevenson's death, wrote :

“ It is good of you to have thought to send me news of the passing away of our old and wonderful friend, J. W. Stevenson. He meant quite a lot to me in the days when I was quite a young missionary. His deep interest and unfailing charity impressed me tremendously. I think I have told you that once or twice he accompanied me on some of my wheelbarrow expeditions to the villages surrounding Shanghai, and the stolid way in which he walked on and on, and the wonderful friendliness which he showed towards the Chinese, taught me many a lesson both in doggedness and adaptability. Now that the wonderful old men of previous generations are passing away, it is good to cherish the memory of a personal friendship with some of them.”

At a time when we have become sadly familiar with lives cut short in the midst of their years, we recognise more readily the beauty of a full-orbed career, especially when it has been marked by invincible resolution and unswerving devotion. And as a man Mr. Stevenson will long be remembered by his "plain devotedness to duty," by "work done squarely," and by

the chivalry  
That dares the right and disregards alike  
The Yea and Nay o' the world.

## HIS CALL

So with the Lord : he takes and he refuses,  
Finds him ambassadors whom men deny,  
Wise ones nor mighty for his saints he chooses,  
No, such as John or Gideon or I.

He as he wills shall solder and shall sunder,  
Slay in a day and quicken in an hour,  
Tune him a music from the Sons of Thunder,  
Forge and transform my passion into power.

F. W. H. MYERS.

## HIS CALL

Yet to the spirit select there is no choice ;  
He cannot say, This will I do or that,  
For the cheap means putting Heaven's ends in pawn,  
And bartering his bleak rocks, the freehold stern  
Of destiny's first-born, for smoother fields  
That yield no crop of self-denying will ;  
A hand is stretched to him from out the dark,  
Which grasping without question, he is led  
Where there is work that he must do for God.

J. R. LOWELL.

JOHN WHITEFORD STEVENSON was born in Glasgow on March 30, 1844. His father was the youngest son of James Stevenson, Laird of Thriepwood in Renfrewshire, and of Rose Love, his wife, who was a daughter of Captain John Love, Laird of Knowes in the same county. The Stevensons had possessed Thriepwood for many generations, and borne their part in the faithful contendings of the Covenanters, one of the family having been outlawed in 1684. His mother's name was Marion Whiteford, daughter of John Whiteford, of Willowyard of Beith, Ayrshire.

Nurtured in the strict Sabbatarian school of Scotland, he yet as a lad had no personal knowledge of Christ as his Saviour, but a dangerous illness at the age of fifteen turned his heart from mere formal religion to the real needs of his soul, and he resolved,

being spared, to live for God. He thereupon began regularly to read his Bible, and to pray ; but after some bitter experience of that great inward struggle of the carnal and spiritual natures, he gave up in despair of ever being delivered from the captivity of sin. To him a holy life seemed impossible, so that when the great revival of the 'sixties reached his neighbourhood he determined to keep aloof from the movement.

Happily, he was constrained to attend one of the meetings, and there God met him. What most deeply impressed him on this occasion was the preacher's assurance that God could keep from falling those who put their trust in Him. In spite of years of church-going it came as a revelation to him to hear any one preach the Gospel, and he was the first of his family to be soundly converted.

It happened that the Convener of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church resided at Castle Douglas, where young Stevenson had been at school, and in the beginning of 1863 Dr. John Paton, then in the full tide of manhood and with his wondrous stories of divine grace in the New Hebrides, came to stay in the Castle Douglas manse, and to preach in the church. The records of missionary successes, and the appeals for more labourers made by that honoured worker, deeply stirred the young convert's heart, and he resolved, should the way open up, to devote his life to the foreign mission-field. But he was never one to be content with mere pious resolution, so he soon secured a vocabulary of one of the South Sea Island languages and made considerable progress in

memorising it. He also made such preparation as he could with a view to study at one of the Scotch universities.

Possessed by the conviction that God wanted him abroad, he spared no pains to learn all that could be learnt of the foreign mission-fields. Madagascar, with its thrilling story, fascinated him, and he read all that he could lay his hand upon concerning that vast island. Dr. Duff, too, the first missionary of the Church of Scotland, was compelled just about this time to return home from India on account of health, and his consummate eloquence and impassioned piety only added fuel to the missionary flame.

He had also become a regular reader of *The Revival*, subsequently called *The Christian*, edited by the late R. C. Morgan, and it was through this journal that he was led to his life's work in China. Among many letters which were then appearing in *The Revival* was one by Mr. George Pearse in the issue of April 7, 1864. This letter gave a brief account of the independent mission at Ningpo, carried on by Mr. Hudson Taylor, and with which Mr. Meadows, the pioneer of that little company which was to become the China Inland Mission, was then associated. Some two months later, in the number for June 25, appeared a long communication from Mr. Taylor himself, then at home in England. This letter was entitled "Labourers for China," and after stating that "the great majority of the Chinese are not more intelligent and far less instructed than the masses at home," he proceeded to say, "I trust that when our revision of the New

Testament is completed, several new workers may accompany us to Ningpo. With their assistance, native helpers, who could not be trusted alone, may be largely used in the dissemination of Christian truth, and the name of the Lord Jesus may be heard in many a city, town, or hamlet now given over to idolatry."

While this correspondence was appearing in the columns of *The Revival*, twelve Christian men, some from Scotland and some from London and other parts of England, all of whom had had the burden of souls laid heavily upon their hearts, met together in May in a house in South Street, Finsbury, to discuss the subject of foreign missions. In a leading article in *The Revival* for May 19 this subject was referred to as follows :

"The correspondence on foreign missions in recent numbers of *The Revival* has elicited many most interesting facts, and among others the following, that many persons in England, without communication with each other, have been maturing plans for the more effectual spread of the Gospel in our colonies and in heathen lands, and that these plans are almost identical. Added to this we may say that several friends in Scotland are moving in the same direction, and we would fain believe that God is thus, by His gracious providential working, exercising their hearts and drawing out His dear people to a united effort to spread the savour of the name of Jesus in regions beyond."

After giving some details concerning the Conference referred to, the article continued :

"All were agreed that much might be done for

the foreign mission-field outside of the ordinary channels of the missionary societies. . . . All the dear friends at the conference were agreed that, whatever might be decided upon, the movement must be carried on in entire harmony and co-operation with existing missionary societies."

The result was that these twelve men, one of whom was Mr. Hudson Taylor—who had not at that time launched the China Inland Mission—met again in June and founded the Foreign Evangelisation Society with Mr. George Pearse as honorary secretary.

All these various articles and letters were read by young Stevenson, and another friend who was equally interested, and these two gave themselves to prayer that they might know God's will. They had already been in correspondence with Dr. Duff, and now they wrote to Mr. Taylor for fuller information. They evidently gave free expression to the many thoughts which had been passing through their minds, for one closing sentence in Mr. Taylor's reply lived in Mr. Stevenson's memory to the end of his days, though the letter was lost, and that was, "The needy province of Chekiang might not be as salubrious as the South Sea Islands, but at the worst it could only be a shorter path to heaven."

But it was not an easy berth that young Stevenson desired. His heart was on fire with devotion to Jesus Christ, and the strenuous and heroic therefore appealed to him. As men responded to Garibaldi when he offered them "Neither pay nor quarters nor provisions, but hunger, thirst, forced marches,

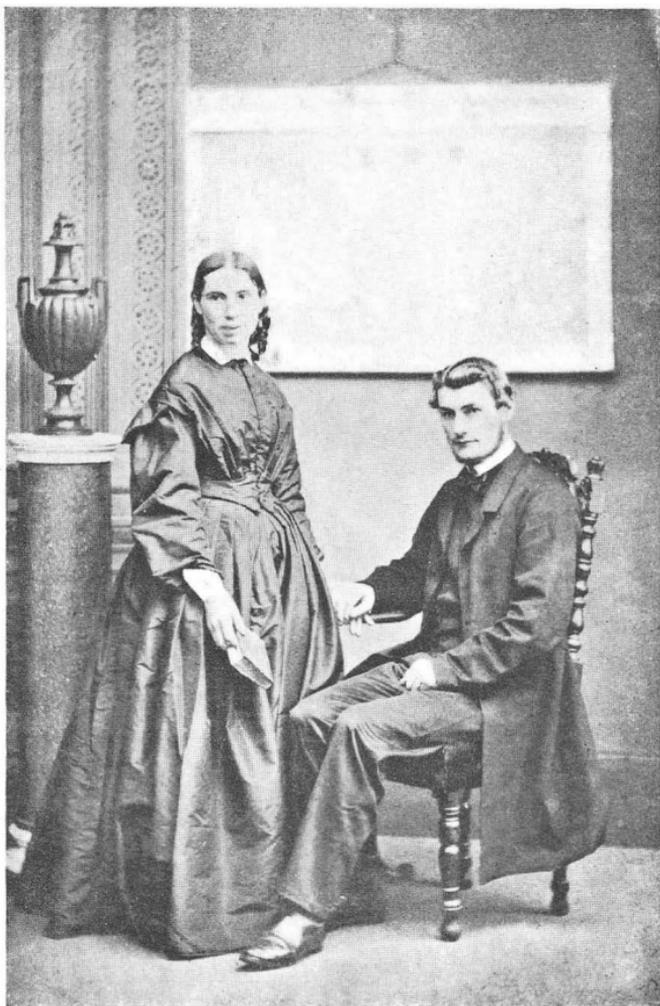
battles, death," so the stern realities of Christ's call found an echo in the deepest and best places of the young Scotsman's heart.

It was not China, however, that fascinated him, but the need of China's millions, and the command of Christ. The more he read about that country—and he read every book he could lay hands on—the less he felt attracted to the people or their land, but he was overwhelmed with the thought of the vast population when compared with the South Sea Islands, and the spiritual claims of that people laid hold upon his heart and conscience.

While God's Spirit was thus applying these facts to his mind, Mr. Taylor was not idle. Knowing that Mr. Berger was in Scotland, he requested him to visit these two young men at Castle Douglas, and so it came to pass that one day a letter from Mr. Berger, dated from the Trossachs, arrived to say that he was passing through Castle Douglas on his way to Stranraer, and hoped to see them. The interview took place in one of the rooms in the King's Arms Hotel, where Mr. and Mrs. Berger were staying, and the issue of the momentous conversation that then took place was that Stevenson decided to offer for China, though his friend, on account of family objections, took another course.

Early in October 1864 young Stevenson said good-bye to the scenes of his youth, and set off for the great metropolis of London. This step was a real step in faith, and was taken in spite of the fact that all his friends accused him of folly in taking up a work without some guarantee of salary. Met at Chalk Farm station by Mr. Lance, then the pastor

at Berger Hall, he continued in London for the next year in study and practical Christian work, as Mr. Lance's assistant. He was a man who believed in work, and in "unwasted days," and so during these full months he transcribed the whole of the Ningpo romanised dictionary, and laboured so assiduously at the language, with Mrs. Hudson Taylor's assistance, that ere he sailed he was able to read with understanding the romanised New Testament. It is also not without interest to mention that, during this time in London he transcribed for the printer the whole of Mr. Taylor's original manuscript of that soul-stirring book, *China's Spiritual Need and Claims*.



MR. AND MRS. J. W. STEVENSON IN 1865

*To face page 19.*

# THE VENTURE OF FAITH

Lord, loosen in me the hold of visible things ;  
Help me to walk by faith, and not by sight ;  
I would, through thickest veils and coverings,  
See into the chamber of the living light.  
Lord, in the land of things that swell and seem,  
Help me to walk by the other light supreme,  
Which shows Thy facts behind man's vaguely hinting dream.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

## THE VENTURE OF FAITH

O Faith ! if thou art strong, thine opposite  
Is mighty also, and the dull fool's sneer  
Hath oftentimes shot chill palsy through the arm  
Just lifted to achieve its crowning deed.

The wicked and the weak, by some dark law,  
Have a strange power to shut and rivet down  
Their own horizons round us, to unwing  
Our heaven-aspiring visions, and to blur  
With surly clouds the Future's gleaming peaks,  
Far seen across the brine of thankless years.

J. R. LOWELL.

It is not easy to-day to appreciate all it meant to Mr. Stevenson and his young bride—for he was married on September 14—to set forth for China on October 3, 1865, in the sailing ship *Antipodes*. The China Inland Mission was then an untried organisation, in fact it had barely begun its existence except in name; for eight months had yet to pass ere the *Lammermuir* party, which more fully inaugurated the Mission, was to sail. Without any Church behind them, without any guarantee of support other than the promises of God, and without the escort of any experienced missionary—for Mr. Taylor was remaining in England—it was no small venture of faith, or ordeal to courage, to set forth to an unknown and distant shore in those early

days. It is a step of faith to-day—it was a still greater one then.

Yet in spite of all temptations to the contrary they set forth accompanied by Mr. Stott, another of the early candidates, the Foreign Evangelisation Society, referred to above, having contributed £100 towards the cost of outfits and passages.

A sea voyage in those days was not undertaken for pleasure. The cabins of the sailing ships were entirely unfurnished, and each traveller had to supply not only his own bedding but hand-basins, and, in fact, everything he was likely to need. Fresh meat and vegetables were a luxury enjoyed only at intervals, and even the supply of water was limited. The Suez Canal had not then been opened, and letters to China cost a shilling per half-ounce *via* Southampton, or fourteen pence if sent *via* Marseilles. The telegraphic cable between China and Europe had not then been completed, and nearly a month was necessary to send a message from one country to the other even by the use of such partial telegraphic facilities as then existed.

The voyage on this occasion occupied 126 days, and this was spoken of as “a very prosperous and speedy passage.” Shanghai was reached on February 6, 1866, and here the little party transferred themselves to a small steamer in which they travelled forward to Ningpo, where Dr. and Mrs. Lord of the American Baptist Mission warmly received them, and for a time gave them hospitality. For the first five or six months the Stevensons resided in Ningpo, their kind hosts placing at their

disposal two rooms in the school building, and here their first-born son, Robert, was born.

Their first duty was naturally the acquisition of the language, and to this end part of each day was devoted to study; while several hours daily were spent in visiting the city, the neighbouring temples, and surrounding villages, in company with Evangelist Tsiu, for the preaching of the Gospel. In this way a good working knowledge of the language was speedily acquired. "Well do I remember," Mr. Stevenson subsequently wrote, "what pleasure I felt when, in the course of a few weeks, I was first able to say a little about Jesus."

These early months in Ningpo, with their happy fellowship with Dr. and Mrs. Lord, were much enjoyed and were ever afterwards a pleasant retrospect. But the spirit of the pioneer made the young missionary look beyond that ancient port to a city even more ancient, and at that time wholly neglected. About a hundred miles away on the main waterway to Hangchow was the great city of Shaohing, the Venice of China, as Marco Polo termed it. The foundations of this city dated back to the days of Yao and Shun, more than 2000 years B.C. Here the great Yü, the Chinese Noah who "subdued the flood," held his court, and here, at the "kiosk of the burial-stone," this hero-Emperor was buried.

At the time of which we are writing Shaohing had sufficiently recovered from the ravages of the Taiping rebellion to justify its name, "Perpetual Prosperity." The burden of this city with its 400,000 inhabitants, and of its well-watered plain with its two million souls, had been heavily laid on

young Stevenson's heart, and on May 23, 1866, just three days before the well-known *Lammermuir* party sailed from London, he, in company with Mr. Meadows and Teacher Feng, entered its portals for the first time. How much they were prospered in their enterprise may be gathered from the fact that on the third day after their arrival they were enabled to secure a house.

The circumstances connected with the renting of these premises, which consisted of an old and neglected baker's shop, supposed to be haunted, were highly amusing and characteristic of Chinese ways. Being foreigners and strangers to the city, Messrs. Meadows and Stevenson had no means of knowing the real holders of the property, and it was not until some days had transpired that they discovered that every name in the deed of rental was fictitious. The reason for this strange procedure was that there might be no trace of the persons who had been parties to the transaction should the officials subsequently raise any objection. In ignorance of these facts they paid over the deposit money and took possession without having so much as met or even learned the real name of the landlord; he, however, never caused any trouble.

It was not until the great heat of the summer was past that the Stevensons removed from Ningpo and took up their residence in the new station. The house which now became their home, though most unsanitary, was admirably adapted for evangelistic purposes, being situated at the junction of four roads hard by the well-known and euphemistically designated "Incense bridge," which spanned the canal.

The passengers and the boatmen who travelled up and down this canal could not but notice the five large characters conspicuously placed on the Mission buildings, and before long the name of the bridge and of the Mission Chapel became synonymous.

The buildings were by no means commodious or comfortable, but pioneers are grateful for small mercies. In the upper story there were three low rooms, almost unendurably hot in summer, and these had to serve as bedroom, combined kitchen and dining-room, and study. Male visitors were received by Mr. Stevenson in the study, but all women guests had to be welcomed by Mrs. Stevenson either in the bedroom or the kitchen. The ground floor was reserved for a chapel, and from seventy to eighty persons could be comfortably accommodated there.

From the commencement there was no difficulty in getting into touch with the people. The street chapel so soon as opened was well filled with visitors, who, though spiritually dark, were intellectually bright. They were by no means prepared to take for granted all that the foreigner said, and used arguments which were both ingenious and subtle. For instance, they would enquire as to the origin of evil, the entrance of sin into the world, and the propriety and utility of prayer. Thus the meetings, far from being dull, were often enlivened by animated discussions.

There were, of course, the usual evil reports and rumours afloat, and these at one time compelled the closing of a school which had been opened. Stones were occasionally flung through the windows,

but much attention was not paid to these irregularities. "We cannot take these things as any criterion of the people's feeling towards us," wrote Mr. Stevenson. "In fact," he continues, "in spite of every difficulty we are feeling very happy, and pray the Lord to condescend to use such weak earthen vessels as we are, and we shall then try through His grace to give Him all the glory."

In addition to the preaching of the Gospel in the street chapel, the tea-shops in the city were regularly visited, and there, with that freedom which is common to the East, open conversation with those present was not only permitted but welcomed. The work was also extended to the neighbouring towns and villages, while for the sake of those who could not read the classical language, Mr. Stevenson had portions of the Scriptures printed in the local dialect by means of the Roman script.

And all this work was not unfruitful, for although no converts were baptized before 1868, there were not wanting hopeful enquirers. One of these early enquirers was a scholar of over sixty years of age, who within two months of the opening of the street chapel manifested a real heart interest in the message of Life.

Another convert of those early days was one whom we may call a baker (though the Chinese steam, not bake, their bread). This man's business was located on one of the busiest thoroughfares in the city, and he made a bold confession of his faith by closing his shop on the Lord's Day, putting up outside a placard in explanation of this strange procedure. Such a public testimony—the first in

this city—soon became widely known and gave rise to much discussion.

Another convert was a boatman named Chang, who became by far the most eloquent and able of Mr. Stevenson's Chinese assistants. He became a striking illustration of the power of Christianity to develop the mental as well as the spiritual faculties. By persevering study he made up to a large extent for the lack of education in his youth, while his native eloquence made him an unrivalled preacher of the Gospel. The wives of these two men, the baker and the boatman, though at first strongly opposed to their husbands' change of faith, were both brought to the Lord in answer to their husbands' prayers and manner of life. These four were among the ten baptized as the firstfruits during the year 1868.

Of these first ten there were two others who became successful preachers, and the two cities of Chenghsien and Sincang were opened to the Gospel by their labours. One of these two, an intelligent and thoughtful shoemaker named Feng, had his interest in Christianity first awakened by one of Mr. Stevenson's conversations in the tea-shops as mentioned above.

Another noteworthy enquirer and subsequent convert was an old lady of sixty years of age. Her husband had died when she was quite young, and as an act of merit she had become a Buddhist devotee. Being well-to-do she owned a private chapel full of idols, and to this centre other women freely came, sometimes to spend whole nights in idolatrous worship with the owner. For seventeen years she had, as a means of obtaining spiritual

merit, abstained from all animal food, but as a testimony to her faith in Christ, she, with another woman who had abstained for twenty-two years, broke her vegetarian vow on New Year's Day 1869.

It need hardly be said that these converts had to endure no little reproach and even persecution for Christ's sake. This was especially the case with the baker, named Kin, who was known by the sobriquet of "the worshipping shopkeeper" in consequence of his habit of closing his place of business on Sundays. For refusing to bear his share of the expenses of certain public idolatrous rites he was made to suffer considerably.

In July 1869 the city of Chenghsien, situated some seventy miles to the south, was, with the aid of the converted shoemaker Feng, opened as an out-station. In spite of much opposition, which in part took the form of posting up vilifying placards, a work of grace was commenced in this centre. Enquirers were enrolled, and the firstfruits were baptized in February 1870.<sup>1</sup>

In June 1870, the year of the Tientsin massacre, a house was rented in the city of Sinchang, about twelve miles distant from Chenghsien. The opposition here was so formidable, and the Chinese helper was so cruelly beaten, that the premises were closed until August, when Mr. Stevenson was prospered in overcoming the local ill-will and re-opened the chapel in peace.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This centre was organised as a regular station in 1916, and a new and beautiful chapel was opened in 1918, communicants being at that time more than two hundred.

<sup>2</sup> At this station there is now a strong church, more than two hundred persons having been baptized from the commencement.

In the following year, 1871, the prospects of the work became even more encouraging, but suddenly Mr. Stevenson was laid aside in October with a serious attack of fever. This illness was followed by cholera, and ere he was fully recovered from this he was again laid low with confluent smallpox. Through all these weary and anxious months of dangerous illness no medical aid was procurable beyond what Mrs. Stevenson herself could render. All the strain and the anxiety fell upon her, though the love and sympathy and the willing assistance of the Chinese converts in this time of trouble is remembered with gratitude to this day.

Trying as these long months of sickness were, they were not without compensation so far as the work was concerned, for the Chinese Christians nobly rose to the occasion, and took upon themselves many of the responsibilities of the local Church, carrying on the regular activities of the station for a period which extended in all to nine months.

One of Mr. Stevenson's first undertakings, so soon as health had been restored, was to visit the out-station Chenghsien and rent new and more commodious premises. During this visit he was brought into touch with a remarkable scholar named Ning. Mr. Ning had not only graduated in the classics of his own country, but he had read as well not a few translations of western scientific works. He had also perused such Christian literature as had come his way, including portions of the Scriptures, but these he confessed he had found both dry and uninteresting; indeed he professed himself as quite sceptical in regard to spiritual matters and regarded

prayer as "absurd." "If there be a God," he said, "He is certainly too great to concern Himself with our small mundane affairs." But when Mr. Stevenson promised to pray for him he was greatly impressed, and said to himself, "Here is a foreigner, a perfect stranger to me, yet so concerned about my welfare that he will pray for me though I do not so much as pray for myself."

What argument had failed to do, this evidence of kind solicitude accomplished. The result was that Mr. Ning began in secret to pray for himself and soon experienced a change of heart which he could not account for. He again began to read the Scriptures, and to his surprise and delight he found that they had become an entirely new book. His wife, too, from whom he had feared opposition, proved most willing to believe, and ere long his son also joined him in claiming Christ as Saviour.

"I have never in my experience," said Mr. Stevenson, "met with a more decided and clear work of the Spirit. He is a man of ability and of considerable influence and standing in Chenghsien." This man was baptized in October 1873, his son in the following November, and his wife and daughter in the spring of the following year. Concerning this convert, Mr. Hudson Taylor, after meeting him, wrote: "An unusually learned man; it was delightful to see him humbly seated at the feet of Christ." And Mr. Stevenson added, "Mr. Ning has counted the cost and has taken a decided stand for the Lord in his native place. When I see what he has done, and the persecution that he is exposed

to, I cannot hesitate to say that the age of heroes is not past. Last Sabbath, unasked by me, he stood up in the chapel, after I had finished preaching, and spoke for a long time, relating his experience and explaining the Christian religion, as he exhorted the hearers to become believers in Jesus. I thanked God and took courage when I heard this man's noble testimony."

Such were some of the fruits of Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson's ministry at Shaohing and out-station. It is needless to say that there were other enquirers who caused grief and disappointment. Up to March 1874 they had had the joy, however, of receiving forty-six persons into the Church by baptism, twelve of whom were women, while in addition there were other candidates for baptism as well as a number of hopeful enquirers.

During these years of toil God had given to Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson a family of five young children, and it became increasingly plain that for the children's sake, as well as for their own, furlough was urgently necessary. To leave the young and growing Church with the converts they had learned to love was by no means easy, but the step was right and had therefore to be taken, though with regret. On January 6, 1874, Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson, with their five children, embarked at Shanghai for Marseilles on the steamship *Ava*, after having handed over the care of the station to Mr. Meadows, with his junior colleague Mr. Douthwaite.

When Mr. Stevenson thus left for furlough, his hope had been to return ere long to the work he had been instrumental in founding, but Mr. Meadows,

who only came as a *locum tenens*, remained as missionary in charge for the next forty years, until his death in 1914. And as we shall see, a very different task was in store for Mr. Stevenson when he returned next time to the East.



JOHN W. STEVENSON IN CHINESE DRESS

*To face page 33.*

THE DISCIPLINE OF  
DISAPPOINTMENT

Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter,  
Yes, without stay of father or of son,  
Lone on the land and homeless on the water,  
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

Yet not in solitude if Christ anear me  
Waketh him workers for the great employ,  
Oh, not in solitude, if souls that hear me  
Catch from my joyaunce the surprise of joy.

F. W. H. MYERS.

## THE DISCIPLINE OF DISAPPOINTMENT

If the chosen soul could never be alone  
In deep mid-silence, open-doored to God,  
No greatness ever had been dreamed or done ;  
Among dull hearts a prophet never grew ;  
The nurse of full-grown souls is solitude.

J. R. LOWELL.

FROM the populous cities of Chekiang and the promising work at Shaohing the guiding hand of God was now to lead Mr. Stevenson to the isolated and trying sphere of Upper Burma. Here character was to be tested by very different experiences from those he had known in China. Separated by half the world from his wife and family, hedged in by almost every possible official restriction, without those longed-for tokens of prosperity, apart from which the heart of all but the stoutest grows sick, long years of toil were to be spent in what seemed almost a forlorn hope.

Yet these experiences were part of the "all things" which were to fit him for the useful service of days to come. These years of solitude and of hope deferred were to discipline and school his soul for those greater tasks of leadership which God had planned for him, though he knew it not.

For many years prayer had been made that God

would open a door into Western China through Burma. This had even been a topic of conversation between Mr. Hudson Taylor and the Rev. William Burns, and before Mr. Stevenson had first sailed for China Mr. Taylor had discussed this matter with him during a visit to Bristol. And now, during his furlough, when Mr. Taylor in his then crippled condition was pondering and praying over the matter of an appeal for new workers, he was introduced to two gentlemen who were deeply interested in Bhamo and Western China. Indeed, one of these gentlemen had been a member of Colonel Sladen's exploring party, which entered China through Burma in 1868. Though they had then been compelled to return to Burma before they had penetrated very far into the Chinese Empire, they assured Mr. Taylor that they regarded the entering of China from the west as a feasible undertaking.

Keenly anxious to secure an entrance into the populous provinces of West China, Mr. Taylor put the proposition before Mr. Stevenson for his prayerful consideration. The mere thought of not returning to Shaohing, where his affections had become centred, was one Mr. Stevenson did not feel he could easily entertain. "At first I felt it very hard," he subsequently said, "to leave the work I had been connected with for some years in Eastern China. A very interesting work was going on at my station there; the labours of some years were bearing fruit; and I was much attached to the converts and the cause. But when I thought of Western China absolutely without the Gospel message; when I thought that in Eastern China the missionaries were

all too few, yet in Western China the need was greater still, I decided that if it were the Lord's will I would go."

But unexpected difficulties arose. On February 21, 1875, Mr. A. R. Margary, a young consular officer, engaged in seeking to open to trade these gates of Western China, was murdered in Yunnan, though provided with a special passport by the Chinese Foreign Office. The tension between Great Britain and China which was consequent on this outrage was so severe that for a time war threatened, but the project of entering the Western Provinces was not abandoned.

"The difficulties," Mr. Taylor wrote, "are to human strength insuperable. . . . Is not all Burma in turmoil? has not Margary been murdered at Manwyne? do not the latest tidings tell of Chinese troops massing in Yunnan?" These things were so; but, convinced that difficulties were made to be overcome, Mr. Stevenson, accompanied by Mr. Henry Soltau, set sail for Rangoon from Glasgow on April 6, 1875, in the steamship *Tenasserim*, with Bhamo as his objective. The river Irrawaddy had been opened as far as Bhamo, a city situated nine hundred miles from the sea, and a British resident was stationed there. Caravans of Chinese traders passed to and fro, while half the population was Chinese, so that this place commended itself as a suitable base for entering the Western Provinces.

Rangoon was reached on Friday, May 17, after a most favourable voyage, during which the Captain, a man of a kind and cordial spirit, had given every facility for Christian work on board. But diffi-

culties and disappointments awaited the pioneers on landing, and these need some brief explanation.

Lower Burma for some years had been incorporated into the Indian Dominions of the British Empire, but Upper Burma was still under the independent rule of King Mindone. Upper Burma, however, had been thrown open in 1862 to commerce, including trade through that territory into China. But difficulties arose, and in 1868 the Government of India, with the sanction of the Government of Burma, organised an expedition to report on the exact position held by the Kahchens, the Shans, and the Panthays (as the Mohammedan insurgents in Yunnan were called), and to ascertain the causes which had led to the suspension of trade with China. This expedition, entrusted to Colonel Sladen, could not fail in the course of its investigations to enter into certain relationships with the rebel Moslem forces in Yunnan ; and the suspicion and fear which such proceedings aroused in the minds of the Chinese Government probably explain the murder of Margary in 1875, when a second British expedition sought to enter China again from the west.

When Mr. Stevenson arrived, the British Government was still uncertain as to whether the Government of Burma or the Chinese authorities were responsible for Margary's death, and his advance into Upper Burma was therefore forbidden. Disappointed but not disheartened, he lost no time in making the best of the situation. From among the Chinese Mohammedan refugees, who had fled from Yunnan when the Chinese Government ruthlessly crushed the rebellion, he engaged one man as a

## THE DISCIPLINE OF DISAPPOINTMENT 39

teacher and another as a servant. He then set himself to the diligent study of the Yunnanese dialect as well as of Burmese.

But the months spent in Lower Burma were a time of severe testing. No one knew when the way to go forward might open, or whether it would open at all, while many discouraged the enterprise entirely. "What I want at this juncture," wrote Mr. Stevenson, "is implicit faith in God. To human vision our project appears, I must say, rather a hopeless undertaking, or, at least, it is so beset with difficulties that without faith in God few men would face it."

Within six months, however, faith and perseverance were rewarded, and Messrs. Stevenson and Soltau, accompanied by Mr. Rose, an experienced American missionary, set forth for Mandalay, the capital of independent Burma. How this move struck an independent observer, the following extracts from a letter from a Christian merchant who had resided at Rangoon for twenty years will show :

"There were no imposing circumstances attending the embarkation of Messrs. Stevenson, Soltau, and Rose. No salute was fired, no flag unfurled, no guard of honour presented arms. . . . But it augurs well for the success of this embassy that it is not initiated with the pomp and circumstances of many others which I have witnessed in Rangoon and that ended in failure in Upper Burma. . . . The utter lack of faith in Christian mission work which one sees among men who are sensible in other points, and men of experience among the people also, is marvellous. One who heard your desire expressed

to see some of the Kahchens brought to the feet of Jesus, said 'Hem! that sentiment is beautiful; but he does not know the Kahchens; he should see some of the spears they use!' . . . But the Pan-thays here regard Mr. Stevenson more as their friend already than they do any one else; and I saw, the day before yesterday, a Kahchen going up to him and asking him for medicine. If these strangers have already felt the power of the tongue, may they not also feel the power of the heart? . . . It is a pleasure to meet a man like Stevenson who can devote himself to the hard and fatiguing work of studying Burmese for ten hours daily, his only recreation being a lesson in the Yunnan pronunciation of Chinese, of which he is nearly master. . . . As I bade the party God-speed this morning I asked him if he was really going to put the key into the door of Western China and turn it. The answer will come by and by. I cannot but think, with such an Englishman as Soltau, such a Scotchman as Stevenson, and such an American as Rose, in God's hands and with God over all, it will certainly be done."

In this hopeful spirit the little party set forth, and having passed the ruined city of Ava, with its sacred memories of Judson and his noble wife, Mandalay, the capital, was reached after twelve days' steady steaming up-stream. Here Mr. Fairclough of the S.P.G. most kindly placed his own house, a commodious wooden building erected at the King's expense, at their disposal. As advance to Bhamo depended upon the favour of the King of Burma, a petition had been prepared in the

## THE DISCIPLINE OF DISAPPOINTMENT 41

Burmese language for presentation to him. This petition was as follows :

“ A humble petition to H.M. the King of Burma respectfully showeth :

“ *First.*—That your petitioners, A. P. Rose of America, J. W. Stevenson of Scotland, and Henry Soltau of England, are Christian missionaries sent out by benevolent people of their respective countries with the one object of teaching and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“ *Secondly.*—That your petitioners are not in any way connected with their respective Governments, nor have they any interest in trade, and consequently have no political or commercial end to serve in petitioning your Majesty.

“ *Thirdly.*—That your petitioners desire to reside in Bhamo in your Majesty’s dominions, and petition that your Majesty be graciously pleased to issue orders granting your petitioners the privilege of securing land on which to build dwelling-houses and other buildings requisite to carry on their missionary work.

“ *Fourthly.*—That should the prayer of your petitioners be granted, your petitioners will ever feel grateful to your Majesty, and will earnestly seek to promote the peace and prosperity of your Majesty’s dominions.”

On Friday, September 24, 1875, the three friends set off in three bullock carts to visit the secretary of state and to present their petition. After a courteous reception, when they stated their request, they withdrew, and next day received word that the King would grant them an audience on the following

Monday. At half-past eight in the morning on that auspicious day M. d'Avera came to escort them to the palace. They were first received by a secretary who detained them for over two and a half hours sitting in a cramped cross-legged position on rugs, after which they were ushered into the Audience Hall or Throne Room. A brief extract from Mr. Soltau's full description of this momentous interview must suffice. Having described the raised platform, extending nearly the whole length of one side of the audience chamber, he proceeds :

“ At one side of the platform was a door which stood open. Through this I presently descried on the staircase the top of the white umbrella which the king alone is allowed to have carried over him. He entered the room by a massively carved and gilded door, opening on to the centre of the platform, and he lay down on the velvet rug, resting his arms on the crimson cushion. His attendants, among whom I noticed a soldier with a rifle and fixed bayonet, came in by the side door and prostrated themselves before him. All the ministers and attendants in like manner bowed themselves to the ground, and remained in that position the whole time they were in the king's presence.

“ The king had been immediately followed by two good-looking little boys, probably his own sons. They carried a golden betel box and spittoon, which they placed by the king's side, and then crouched behind him. One of them was dressed in a handsome green velvet tunic, with a diamond necklace and a handsome under-garment. The king himself had a grandly worked under-garment, a

white jacket, and a white band of muslin round his head. He has a refined face, with an intelligent expression and often smiles; while talking, he fidgeted about a little rosary he held in his hand. His hair, which was considerably sprinkled with grey, was fastened in a simple knot at the top of his head; he wore a moustache also.

“ We must have been not more than eighteen or twenty feet from him, but he took up his binoculars and leisurely surveyed us for some time. He broke the silence by asking, ‘ Where is the American ? ’ Mr. Rose was introduced, and bowed, as indeed we all had done when he first entered. After asking Mr. Rose a few questions, he turned to Mr. Stevenson, and then to me. We were introduced to him, and he enquired how long we were going to stay in Mandalay. Having replied till Thursday, the king remarked that our stay being so short he would be unable to say many things he desired, and also expressed regret that we were not to remain in Mandalay under his immediate protection.

“ He made us each promise that we would write to our different countries and ask that a teacher might be sent to live in Mandalay, promising that he would support him, and give him house and schools. He again urged us to stay, saying, ‘ There are many people in the Golden City, and I will see you properly cared for, and your benefit will be great. Up there in Bhamo, among those wild people, it is unsafe; for they are not to be trusted. I will not prevent your going; but if things are unfavourable, come back and I will receive you.’

“ We then asked if he would graciously grant us

some land at Bhamo. He said, 'Yes; the minister shall arrange all that for you.'

"To our great surprise presents were then handed to us. These were brought on wooden trays and laid before us.

"They consisted of three handsome little silver betel boxes, and three Burmese bags containing three hundred rupees each.

"We thanked the king, saying how surprised we were, and how unlooked for was this kindness.

"The king appeared pleased at our surprise and gratification, and said as he rose to leave, 'When you go among those wild people act with caution and prudence.'

"I have related these circumstances in the simple way in which they occurred. I have not attempted to portray our feelings as we went through the varied scenes, nor have I recorded the many times in which, as we sat among those native princes, we lifted up our hearts in prayer to our Heavenly Father, and committed our case into His all-wise and loving hands.

"It has been beautiful to watch the gentle unfolding of our path day by day, and to see at each step how God was doing His best for us, and in the fulness of time was unlocking the door that opens the way for the Gospel to Upper Burma and Western China."

On the day following this audience one of the officers of state handed the missionaries an official letter addressed to the Governor of Bhamo instructing him, in the King's name, to allow the foreigners to select any site they might desire in the city.

Armed with this important document, they bade farewell to the kind friends who had assisted them in Mandalay, and at half-past six on Thursday morning, only three days after the audience, they started off on the remaining three hundred miles of river journey to Bhamo, which city was reached on Sunday, October 3.

How much they had been prospered they did not fully realise for some time, for immediately after their departure from Rangoon orders had arrived from the Indian Government forbidding missionaries on any account to enter Upper Burma. This prohibition followed them to Mandalay, only to find that they had left. It followed them again to Bhamo, but there they were already peacefully settled and did not feel called upon to go back upon God's guidance and manifest blessing.

But all was not smooth sailing. The Governor of Bhamo, though professedly friendly, yet secretly opposed them, and it was not until after his death some months later that his successor granted them the site they had set their hearts upon. Until this had been obtained, Messrs. Stevenson and Soltau lived in what is called a *zayat*, a sort of shed by the roadside. Into this building crowds of people came, many of them Chinese, to whom scriptures and portions, given by the British and Foreign Bible Society, and tracts, issued by the Religious Tract Society, were distributed. Interesting conversations with these men were held, and Mr. Soltau soon won the confidence of many by the medical assistance he was able to give.

The wild hill-men much excited Mr. Stevenson's

interest. "They used to walk past the *zayat* very timidly," he said. "They could not muster sufficient confidence to come in, but we made special effort to show them kindness, soon gained their confidence, and they came in and would bring their friends to introduce them to us. They are not an attractive people. I may say that with their long knives and spears and filthy persons they are anything but attractive, but they are without the Gospel of Christ, and our hearts yearn after them."

All the kindnesses shown and simple medical help given were not in vain. After a little more than a year at Bhamo one of the chiefs sent Mr. Stevenson a letter inviting him and Mr. Soltau to visit him in the hills. In this letter he mentioned having received medical assistance when in Bhamo some months previously, and now he was sending a pony in charge of his nephew, and some servants, with the request that the missionaries would go and render help to a sick relative. This invitation was accepted as an answer to prayer, for the two missionaries were longing to get among the people in the hills. But again difficulties presented themselves. The political agent of the Indian Viceroy evidently heard of their intended visit, and sent word to say that he had strict orders from the Government of India not to allow them to leave Bhamo.

The facts, however, were placed before him. Was it wise to refuse an invitation from a chief, or to neglect such an opportunity of gaining a friend among these hill-folk? The British official replied, "The circumstances are peculiar; you have been

specially invited; you are going to visit a sick person and take medicine. If you will give me a paper signed guaranteeing that you will not cross into China I will give permission." Here was a dilemma. The last thing they desired was to give such an undertaking, but to refuse meant being confined to Bhamo and the declining of the chief's request. Here was an open door, at least for work among the Kahchens, it surely must be right to accept it though it seemed to close more fast than ever the doors beyond. In faith that in God's good time the next step would be made clear, they gave the written promise and set forth for the chief's home.

"Thank God," said Mr. Stevenson, "that though we were bound, the Word of God is not bound. An entrance to Yunnan has been found for the Word of God. The Chinese come by crowds, and they have taken the scriptures into China. If it were not for the restrictions put upon us by our own Government, my firm conviction is that it would be as easy for us to go from Bhamo into China as it would be to go from one county to another in England."

This visit to Matang, situated only one day's journey from China, was full of adventure. Starting early on the morning of Friday, November 3; they proceeded through the jungle, amid beautiful trees hung with festoons of creepers springing up from a sea of elephant grass, along the narrow pathway which did service for a road. Through mud and water, over trunks of fallen trees, up steep rocky paths, with sharp half-cut bamboo spikes endangering their eyes and face, they went forward. The first

night was spent in the jungle, sleeping in their rugs on the ground despite the presence of wild beasts. From the top of one ridge could be seen afar the silver thread of the Tapeng River, and farther away still the Irrawaddy. Through miles of lovely scenery the travellers proceeded, reaching their destination on the afternoon of the second day. Here they found a higher degree of civilisation than had been anticipated. The houses were more comfortable and home-like than the Burmese, and the dress of the women was more becoming.

“The people,” said Mr. Stevenson, “received us kindly. We went from village to village, distributed medicine, and talked to the people. We carried no weapons. They all had their knives and spears with them, but we were protected and preserved by God, and were free from fear all the time. These wild men treated us kindly. They gave us the best they had. We slept on the floor the same as they did, and they shared their simple fare with us, and after six weeks on the hills they begged us to remain there to establish schools for the children, and said they would build houses for us.”

At the close of these six weeks, and after a further few days elsewhere, the travellers returned to Bhamo. So far as the people and the native authorities were concerned they had found an open door; the Indian Government alone hindered progress. Writing early in 1877, Mr. Stevenson said: “If one remaining obstacle were removed we should not have any difficulty in getting into Yunnan. Really it is wonderful how God has opened door after door. The Kahchens I look upon as our best allies. A

few days ago the native Governor at Bhamo said publicly that we were at perfect liberty to come and go from the hills as we please and when we please."

As Mr. Stevenson became acquainted with the language of these tribespeople, he compiled a vocabulary of their words and phrases in view of future work, but otherwise there were few visible results. The people they reached came not to stay, but to go down to Mandalay and then back again to Yunnan. Interesting conversations took place, scriptures were circulated, and then their visitors were seldom seen again. In this way hundreds and thousands heard the Gospel, and scripture portions penetrated into West China. Yet this somewhat unsatisfactory work was maintained in hopes that the door into China itself would ere long be opened. During the visit to the hills mentioned above, the missionaries had seen beyond the frontier the extensive plain of Lungchwan, and beyond that the lofty mountains of Yunnan. A journey of merely two or three hours would have brought them into Chinese territory, but, though neither the Kahchens nor the Chinese offered any opposition, the Indian Government did. The time was not yet.

Meanwhile the work at Bhamo was strengthened by the arrival of Dr. and Mrs. Harvey and Mr. and Mrs. Adams in 1876, though failure of health cut short their service in that trying climate. Mr. Stevenson, too, found it necessary to visit the home-country for a short season, and Bhamo was left on April 6, 1877, the second anniversary of his sailing with Mr. Soltau from Glasgow. Happily Mr. McCarthy reached Bhamo a few months later, at the

close of his long journey across China—the first non-official journey across the country,—and was able to remain for six months to assist during Mr. Stevenson's absence. Mr. Cameron also reached Bhamo a few weeks later than Mr. McCarthy, after his extensive journeys across China and through Eastern Tibet, but neither Mr. McCarthy nor Mr. Cameron were permitted by the Indian Government to re-enter China by the way they had come.

In August 1878 Mr. Stevenson once more bade farewell to his wife and family at home, and set forth for Bhamo. This time the journey was made *via* Paris, Marseilles, and Calcutta, Paris being visited in company with Mr. McCarthy, who had recently returned home, that work might be done among the Chinese who were present at the great international exhibition. Here, through the assistance of Mr. George Pearse, the Rev. Baron Hart, and others, the Chinese were all invited to tea, when scriptures and tracts were distributed and opportunity was afforded for Christian service. It was believed that a good impression was made.

Burma was reached by Mr. Stevenson again in October, a few weeks after King Mindone's death at Mandalay. He called upon the Prime Minister, reported on the work that had been done during the last three years, and sought for fuller liberty in travelling among the hills. He rejoined Mr. Soltau at Bhamo on November 3, and was much impressed with the progress and improved attention of the people since he had left. Ere many days had elapsed an invitation came from the Loi-ying chief for the missionaries to visit the hills, and as the

British political agent made his permission dependent upon the local Governor, who put no obstacle in their way, Mr. Soltau set forth, while Mr. Stevenson continued the work among the Chinese in the city.

Following the death of King Mindone, Burma experienced a period of great unrest. There were not only hostilities between the Burmese and Kah-chens, but the new king, Thebaw, made himself notorious by his massacres and atrocities. So serious did the situation become that in October 1879 the British resident withdrew from Mandalay. Messrs. Stevenson and Soltau were officially informed of this, and opportunity was offered them to leave by the steamer which brought them the tidings, but they both decided to remain at their post. They were assured, as they wrote a few weeks later, that "all will be for the glory of God and we can rest in this. From the officials downward we are being treated as well as when the Union Jack was floating from the residency."

With these changed conditions greater liberty was enjoyed. The British resident having withdrawn, Mr. Stevenson now felt free to attempt a journey into China, and towards the close of the year, leaving Mr. Soltau in charge at Bhamo, he made a trial entry and crossed the frontier, reaching the prefectural city of Yungchang, about one hundred miles beyond the border. He was thus the first European traveller to enter Yunnan from Burma after the restoration of Chinese rule. Encouraged by this success he returned to his colleague, and they both set forth together in November 1880, not only to enter but to cross China from west to east. So

much had their work, especially Mr. Soltau's medical work, been appreciated, that the officials sought to dissuade them from leaving Bhamo, but their plans having been made they started in company with a caravan of nearly six hundred animals, attended by some four hundred Chinese, Shans, and Kahchens. The work at Bhamo was left in charge of a trusted Chinese evangelist, and they themselves travelled on ponies which had been presented to them by Count Szechenyi, a Hungarian traveller, some months before.

The journey was attended not only with adventure but with imminent danger. At one point, especially, a determined effort was made by a tribe, which considered itself injured by the death of a chieftain who had accompanied Major Sladen's expedition, to capture Messrs. Stevenson and Soltau, either to hold them to ransom or to exact life for life. Their dachs, or sword knives, were drawn, and a free fight followed between the caravan party and the hillsmen, and only calmness, self-possession, and tact on the part of the missionaries, and faithful adhesion and skilful diplomacy on the part of their Kahchen friends and the leaders of the Chinese caravan saved them, under God, from a serious issue. As it turned out the quarrel was happily settled by a small present of money, and Messrs. Stevenson and Soltau were granted the special right of travelling without molestation through the district inhabited by this hostile party.

The journey from Bhamo, from the Irrawaddy to Anpien, where the Yangtze was reached, occupied seventy-nine days. From this point seven more

days brought them to Chungking, the great western commercial capital, no missionary or mission station having been passed on this more than a thousand miles. Hankow was reached on March 25, only two mission stations, Chungking and Ichang, having been passed on the whole journey of 1900 miles from Bhamo to that port.

After the briefest stay at the coast Mr. Stevenson returned alone to Bhamo by sea, the work in that city being resumed in July 1881. The indifference of the Chinese and the lack of spiritual results were a sore trial to him, and on September 30 he wrote : " It is very painful and trying to me not to be able to report any signs of spiritual blessing. We get listeners but they are as a rule very listless. It is nearly six years since I first landed in Bhamo, and I cannot recall a single instance of a Chinaman who openly opposed or argued against the Christian doctrine we preached. They indolently assent to all we say, and there, so far as we have seen as yet, the matter rests."

Two months later he wrote again : " My spirit is burdened every day because of the lack of visible fruit. This station is emphatically a place of call. Chinese come and are interested, and begin to attend worship and prayers regularly. Our hopes are raised and then the men disappear. On enquiry we learn that they have gone to Mandalay, or up to the jade mines, or have returned into Yunnan. This is not a little disappointing ; still, the Lord helping us, we will continue to witness for Him."

It had rejoiced him to know that Mr. and Mrs. George Clarke had settled at Talifu " only twenty

days distant" ! and he hoped to be able to cross the border once again so as to visit them. Though marauding bands of lawless Kahchens had closed the roads, and for a time no caravans got through, conditions improved during the winter, as many as five thousand pack animals reaching Bhamo during the season. "I had looked forward," he wrote, "with some interest to going into Yunnan this season, and could have gone in at any time so far as the Kahchens are concerned, but being single-handed I felt that the claims of the work here were paramount. I never had a season of such excellent opportunities for preaching and I never saw the truth excite so much interest, nor, at times, such stern opposition. This is much better than indifference."

The long and faithful labours of years were beginning to tell, and the promise, "in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not," was about to be fulfilled.

Writing in the summer of the following year, he says: "This day, July 20, 1883, has been a day of great joy in Bhamo. We have witnessed the first-fruits of the Gospel among the Chinese here make a formal and decisive proclamation of their intention hereafter to be known as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. To-day we have seen a tangible answer granted by God to the prayers, labours, watchings, fastings, and tears of nearly eight long years. Two Chinamen, who have long evinced an interest in the truths of the Gospel, were to-day baptized in the Irrawaddy.

"The outward circumstances were all that could

## THE DISCIPLINE OF DISAPPOINTMENT 55

be desired, and lent a peculiar charm to the sacred rite. The noble river, nearly three miles wide, was in full flood, and an immense expanse of water was presented to the eye. The peaceful repose that rested on the whole scene gave one more the idea of a large lake than a river hurrying on to the sea, restless to complete the journey of some 900 miles yet remaining before that goal is reached."

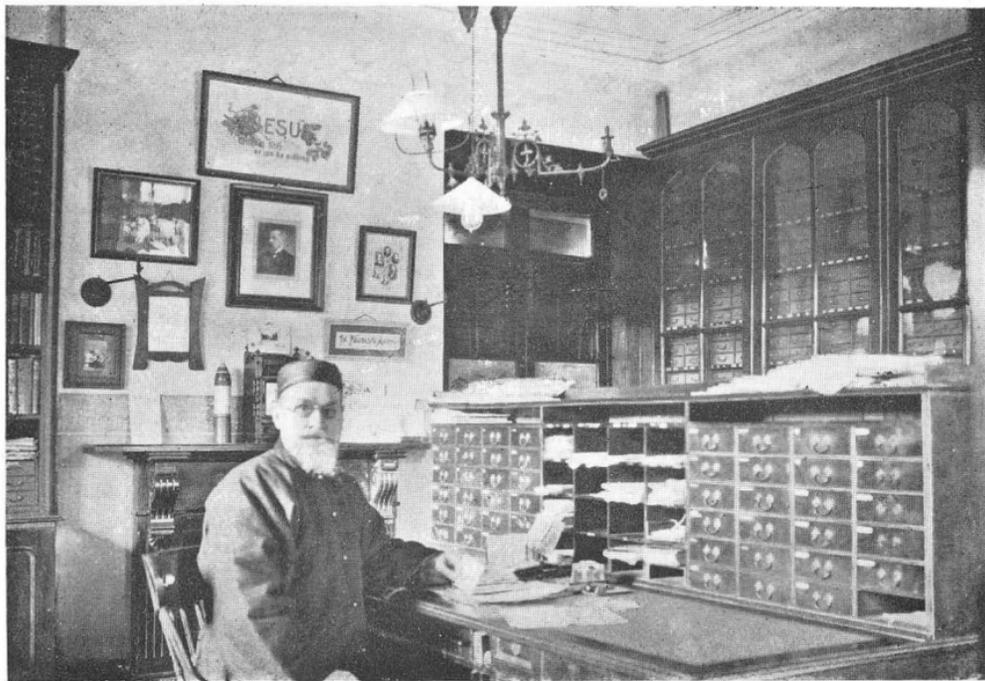
These two men came from distant homes, one being a native of Tengyueh in Yunnan, and one being from Kwangtung. In addition to these two there were about twenty others who were really interested in the Gospel, who regularly attended the services, and were classed by their fellow-countrymen as Christians.

The day after these baptisms, Mr. Stevenson, in response to a cable from home, left Bhamo for England, and thus closed another chapter in his missionary experience. These years in Burma had tested him in a way he had not experienced in Shaohing. At Shaohing he had enjoyed the stimulus of seeing not a few persons converted to God through his ministry, while at Bhamo for the greater part of his time he had, as he himself reported, only met with indifference. Not only had Bhamo failed to prove a door into Western China, but it had been found to be a very unfruitful field. It had also been a lonely and trying post to hold. Separated from his family, the sense of solitude and isolation had at times been almost unbearable. So great was the longing for news that he would sometimes go down to the river's edge and listen with his ear to the water, hoping to catch the sound of the steamer's

paddles which might be bringing the mails from his loved ones at home.

But little as he knew it then, this was part of his training in character and experience which was to fit him for the important work of years to come. Eight years at Shaohing had given him a valuable acquaintance with the work of a settled station and the needs of a growing Church. Eight years in Burma had taught him to endure hardness and to sympathise with those who, in other lonely stations, might be called upon to face a like experience to his own.

Of Bhamo itself it must suffice to say that it was long retained as a station of the Mission, but the direct route into Yunnan was eventually opened up through Tongking in the south and not through Burma in the west. The high mountain ranges and deep river chasms, which all run from north to south, favour entrance through French Tongking rather than through British Burma. Though the Indian Government have had the route from Bhamo to China surveyed for a railway, the necessary tunnelling through the hills and the bridging of innumerable chasms would be so great and costly an undertaking that its realisation is improbable for many years to come.



HIS HEADQUARTERS AT SHANGHAI

*To face page 57.*

THE  
REFINING OF RESPONSIBILITY

What can we do, o'er whom the unbeholden  
Hangs in a night with which we cannot cope ?  
What but look sunward, and with faces golden  
Speak to each other softly of a hope ?

Can it be true, the grace he is declaring ?  
Oh, let us trust him, for his words are fair !  
Man, what is this, and why art thou despairing ?  
God shall forgive thee all but thy despair.

Truly he cannot, after such assurance,  
Truly he cannot and he shall not fail ;  
Nay, they are known, the hours of thine endurance,  
Daily thy tears are added to the tale.

F. W. H. MYERS.

## THE REFINING OF RESPONSIBILITY

Never seduced through show of present good  
By other than unsetting lights to steer  
New-trimmed in Heaven, nor than his stedfast mood  
More stedfast, far from rashness as from fear;  
Rigid, but with himself first, grasping still  
In swerveless poise the wave-beat helm of will.

J. R. LOWELL.

MR. STEVENSON'S return to England after more than eight years in Burma synchronised with a period of rapid expansion and fuller organisation in the history of the Mission. The "Seventy" were then going forth to China, and throughout Great Britain there was a great outburst of missionary fervour following Messrs. Moody and Sankey's second mission in this country, which found its climax in the outgoing of the Cambridge Band. Into this great movement Mr. Stevenson threw himself both heart and soul. This was the longest period he ever spent at home on furlough, as he did not sail again until November 4, 1885, and Liverpool had been reached in September 1883. It was no period of rest but of strenuous labour. Either he was assisting at headquarters in London, or engaged in meetings which necessitated constant travelling.

"We were tremendously busy in those days," he said, referring to the work entailed by the out-

going of the Cambridge Band. In Scotland he arranged meetings for Messrs. Studd and Stanley Smith, sparing neither trouble nor expense to make them a success, and he wrote with enthusiasm of the gatherings in Edinburgh in the Assembly Hall and Synod Hall which were filled with students. It was the same in the Midlands and in the south of England, many meetings being held in Devonshire, while he visited the Isle of Wight and other places with Messrs. Cassels and Hoste. Reserved Scotsman as he was, he caught the flame of enthusiasm and received great blessing in his own soul, which affected the future of his ministry.

His visit with Mrs. Stevenson and his daughter Mary to Keswick in the summer of 1885 was also an uplifting time. Writing from Glasgow to Mr. Taylor in September 1885, he says :

“ I snatch a minute to drop you a line to say that God has been doing great things for me since you left. I have been experiencing a deeper peace and more power in my service. To God be all the glory. I am convinced we are about to see yet greater things in this country in the way of consecration and devotion to God’s work abroad.”

He then proceeded to tell of his visit to Mr. A. Orr Ewing’s home and of the helpful time of prayer he had had with him until the early hours of the morning, and of how this wealthy Scotsman was surrendering himself to God for work in China in connection with the Mission.

In another letter, dated from Edinburgh a week later, he continued: “ I have been pretty busy lately. Certainly we have had most wonderful

meetings. Ever since the Keswick Convention my cup has been running over." As we shall see, this was but the beginning of yet greater joy and fullness of blessing.

On November 4, 1885, Mr. Stevenson set forth once more for China, this time escorting a party of eight new workers, two of whom were pioneers of the Bible Christian Missionary Society. When he landed at Shanghai on Christmas Eve, expecting to go forward shortly to Yunnan, he was met by Mr. Hudson Taylor, who asked him to go as his deputy to deal with difficulties which had arisen in the work in the provinces of Chekiang and Shensi.

As far back as August 1883, Mr. Taylor had in a circular letter addressed to the missionaries outlined what he felt was needed for the development and perpetuation of the Mission's work in China, and among the plans proposed was the appointment of a China Council composed of provincial superintendents and a Deputy-Director in the field. In Mr. Stevenson Mr. Taylor felt he had found the man for the supremely important work of being his deputy, and writing home to England on April 5, 1886, to the friends of the Mission, he said: "Mr. Stevenson, who has recently returned to the field, has undertaken to act as my deputy in districts which I cannot personally visit, and generally in matters requiring attention during my absence from China. Thus one of the most important needs of the work has been supplied."

The spirit in which Mr. Stevenson entered upon this important ministry will best be seen by some extracts from his letters of this period. Chekiang

had been visited during January and February 1886, and new workers escorted to their stations, and on March 8 he set forth for the more distant province of Shensi, travelling *via* Hankow with another party of new workers. At Hanchung he met in conference sixteen of the Shensi workers, and also discussed with the brothers Polhill the prospects of work in the province of Szechwan where they had been travelling. In a letter dated from Hanchung, May 26, 1886, the twentieth anniversary of the sailing of the *Lammermuir* party, he wrote as follows :

“ Praise for twenty years’ blessing given to the China Inland Mission from our gracious Father. May the third decade witness mighty outgoings of power from the risen and all-powerful Saviour !

“ Well, dear Mr. Taylor, I am so overflowing with joy that I can scarcely trust myself to write to you. God has done great things for us up here. I do bless His Holy Name for the peace and joy that fills my soul, and also for the floods that have come down upon my beloved brothers and sisters at present in Hanchung. We had the full-tide last night, and found it hard work to break up such a glory-time. The Lord has given us all a wonderful manifestation of Himself these few days ; but we are all satisfied that there are infinite stores of grace and power yet at our disposal.

“ Last Saturday was the beginning of the shower that has fallen so copiously upon us. I am sure none of us will ever forget the heart-melting testimonies last night. The Lord has filled us and made us one in hope and expectation for the yet number-

less blessings represented by 'the exceeding abundantly.' I wish you could have been with us last night and witnessed the deep, overflowing joy, and heard the glad, full surrender of all our dear brothers and sisters to Christ. I think you would not have slept much for delight. As long as we keep banded together in love and consecration, as is happily the case here, there need be no doubt regarding our success in China—none. . . . The love and confidence the brothers and sisters lavish on me makes me feel humiliated and at the same time grateful to God. I do ask you to pray specially for me that I may not hinder the mighty working of God in me and through me by pride or self-will. There is a path of continual victory and blessing, and I am ambitious that I may tread this path and that nothing may come in to impede my fully following Christ.

"It is most kind of God to have given me at the very outset in a new sphere of service such a rich token of approval that I am overwhelmed with His love. If I had any misgivings as to the position you have been good enough to ask me to take, and I must confess that I have not been without some as to fitness for such a weighty responsibility, the Lord has confounded my fears and misgivings by the blessing He has vouchsafed to me and others here, so that I go forward feeling my feet are on the Rock and God is with me. It is enough—'I am with you always.' Excuse this personal reference; I trust you to interpret it as I mean it."

Two days later Mr. Stevenson left for the neighbouring province of Shansi, where he was to meet

Mr. Hudson Taylor on that memorable occasion when Mr. Hsi was appointed pastor. Pingyangfu was reached on June 23, and here, while waiting for Mr. Taylor's arrival, he forwarded to Mr. Taylor a proposed course of study for C.I.M. probationers, to which subject he had given much thought during the quiet days of travelling by river from Shanghai to Shensi. The original copy of his letter lies before us as we write, and occupies six full quarto pages. The course suggested was, with a few modifications, subsequently accepted for use in the Mission. In his covering letter he writes :

“ I can see that if some system is adopted at once the efficiency and character of our workers in five years' time will be very different from what it is at present. I do not expect you will accept it as it stands. I hope you will use your big axe and lop off here and there and get it into proper shape and proportions. I have received help from Messrs. Baller, King, and Pearse in the preparation, but most from Mr. Baller.”

We need not recount the well-known story told in *Pastor Hsi*, and elsewhere, of the days of blessing in Shansi ; of Mr. Stevenson's part in the conferences at Hungtung and Pingyangfu, and his subsequent journey with Pastor Hsi to the promising work west of the Fen river. He had been deeply impressed with what he had seen, his faith had been quickened and enlarged, and he was full of expectations of blessing. On September 16 he wrote from Taiyuanfu to Mrs. Taylor as follows :

“ Praise God, the blessing which we have been brought into through Christ will never be ex-

hausted. It is now flowing fuller and deeper every day. . . .

“ We are greatly encouraged out here and are definitely asking and receiving by faith definite blessing for this hungry and thirsty land. We are fully expecting at least one hundred fresh labourers to arrive in China in 1887. I am happy to think that God is very likely to rebuke our small faith by sending a great many more than the number stated above according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. The field is opening up most wonderfully and prayer is being answered for this land. But before the overwhelming flood of blessing that is coming there must be more prayers and more living sacrifices wholly and consecratedly offered. These will come in far larger proportion than ever before, and so in regard to the past, present, and future we can but shout, ‘Hallelujah! Worthy is our king to receive all power, honour, and glory.’

“ My visit to Shansi has been most delightful and I am sorry to leave for several reasons. I have met the most of the native Christians in the south of the province. They are warm-hearted and zealous disciples, and some of them are very joyful. I have learned many a lesson of simple trust and faith from them.”

This is, so far as is known, the first reference to “the Hundred.” Speaking subsequently of those days, he said: “I was just thinking and praying about it. We all had visions at that time, and Mr. Taylor used to say I was going too fast.” Shanghai was reached on October 25, and in

November the first meeting of the newly formed China Council met at Anking.

Of the important issues of these gatherings we need not speak, for they belong rather to the history of the Mission than to a life sketch of one man. At all the meetings Mr. Stevenson was present, entering heartily into the plans for the development and consolidation of the work, and on November 25, the day before the Council closed, he, at Mr. Taylor's request, wrote his first circular letter as Deputy Director in China to the members of the Mission. The immediate object of this letter was to remind those who received it that December 31 was the annual day for prayer and fasting. One or two extracts from this and another circular letter, issued a year later, may be appropriately quoted. It will be remembered that Mr. Stevenson had just returned from a long inland journey, that he had seen afresh the needs of China, and had had before him living illustrations of what the Chinese Christians could become, especially as revealed in Pastor Hsi, in whose company he had spent several weeks. Writing on November 28, 1886, he says :

“ Our beloved Director has during this year made arrangements for the subdivision of responsibility and for the more efficient carrying on of the work through provincial superintendents, but, beloved fellow-labourers, these things are but the scaffolding to assist us in our building. We cannot keep it too prominently before us that our great object is not the mere opening of stations or the multiplication of missionaries, but the salvation of Chinese men and women.

## THE REFINING OF RESPONSIBILITY 67

“ We are sent by the Master to make disciples and to be fishers of men. . . .

“ Our circumstances resemble those of the disciples in the case of the lunatic in Matt. xvii. ; the difficulties arose from unbelief in the disciples and not from the case itself, and so, dear brethren, let us give ourselves to prayer and fasting that all unbelief may be cast out by the mighty incoming of the Holy Ghost into our hearts.

“ My visit to South Shansi this year has filled me with fresh hope and new enthusiasm. . . . In Shensi, Anhwei, and Chekiang there have likewise been considerable additions to the various churches as well as smaller accessions in other provinces. These are encouraging facts. . . . The going out of twenty-two new workers, five of whom are self-supporting, this year is in itself no small cause for thanksgiving. Our needs are, however, so great that this increase has appeared as nothing, and I would suggest that definite prayer for not less than one hundred new workers during 1887 be offered on our fast day, and also that it be made a subject of daily petition afterwards. ‘ Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My name. Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.’ ”

So earnestly had he taken up this question of “ the Hundred ” that a few days later when at Takutang he persuaded Mr. Hudson Taylor to allow him to cable home : “ Join us in prayer for a hundred new missionaries in 1887.”

Just a year later he sent out from Shanghai the annual circular letter, writing as follows :

“ What a year of mercies it has been to us as a

Mission. No one can estimate fully what may be the outcome of this year's prayers and efforts. . . . He is answering our prayers for the hundred missionaries. . . . We have every encouragement to go forward in this service. The promises of God never were brighter or stronger than they are to-day. The mighty Saviour is yearning with divine compassion over the lost and He has made by the gift of the Holy Ghost every provision to fit weak instruments such as we are to accomplish His purposes in saving the lost in China. To plead inability, or the hardness of the people, or their degradation would be to miss the mark altogether."

To gain a glimpse into the working of his own heart, we may quote from a personal letter written to Mrs. Taylor a few weeks before the one quoted above :

"I want specially to assure you that your appreciation and sympathy is a very great encouragement to me. The Lord has indeed heard prayer and helped me in a manner I never expected. To His Name be all the glory and praise. The danger now is of being puffed up and a feeling of pride and self-satisfaction gaining a pernicious place, consciously or unconsciously. The feeling of independence is a serious danger and I do feel I need much prayer that I may really and truly every moment feel my absolute dependence upon God. Except the Lord build the house the builders build in vain. But in this I am reminded that the safest course is to trust and not be afraid. 'In everything by prayer and supplication.' "

These letters throw light upon the spirit in which

Mr. Stevenson entered upon the onerous and responsible duties of his office, but although the greater part of his labours for China falls after his appointment as Deputy Director in the field, it is not possible in this brief sketch to follow even in outline the strenuous and responsible years which followed. From this time onward Shanghai became his headquarters and his home—if a place of residence can be so called when wife and family are absent,—and here he remained, with little change either in summer or in winter, for many years.

Unhappily the routine work of administration does not lend itself to description. His entry into office came at a time of unprecedented expansion in the Mission's history, there being less than two hundred members when he sent forth his first circular letter, yet within ten years the number of workers had risen to nearly seven hundred. What this increase entailed in the way of organisation in the field cannot easily be imagined or described. Merely to welcome the workers, and study their gifts and characters with a view of their future spheres of service, was no small task. "It was my supreme joy," said Mr. Stevenson when speaking some years later at Shanghai, "to welcome at this centre each one of the hundred missionaries who came out in 1887 in answer to prayer, and the many hundreds who have since come to China in connection with the Mission."

And he did not welcome them merely as additions to the staff but as personal friends, not only on their first arrival in the field but whenever they subsequently visited Shanghai. On this point Mr.

Stark, who laboured with him in Shanghai for more than a quarter of a century, has stated that :

“ Mr. Stevenson had a great capacity for friendship. ‘ He who would have friends must show himself friendly,’ said Solomon. He fulfilled this condition in no ordinary degree and he reaped a rich reward ; for by his kindly manner and friendly spirit he won many friends true and staunch, the enjoyment of whose fellowship any man might covet.”

But it is quite impossible to give any adequate idea of the duties and exacting demands made upon one responsible for directing the work of a large organisation in the field. There was the carrying on of a voluminous correspondence with the hundreds of scattered workers, the necessity of studying the conditions and requirements of each station, the frequent demands upon sympathy, the giving of encouragement and counsel, the care and thought inseparable from the handling of personal and complex problems, the oversight of finance, and the thousand and one things connected with the daily care of the churches.

And in addition to the normal routine of office life came times of immeasurable stress, when riots and massacres and revolutions convulsed the country and endangered life and property. When Fleming, the first C.I.M. martyr, was killed in 1898, and when Bruce and Lowis were massacred in Hunan a few years later, he was in charge in Shanghai. And then in 1900, although at that time he enjoyed the support and counsel of Mr. Hoste, the tension and pressure from his official responsibilities and the knowledge that life and death frequently hung upon

decisions made were almost more than flesh and blood could bear. Human and mental endurance were tested to the utmost, and only long tramps or barrow rides into the country around Shanghai kept him physically equal to the prolonged and painful strain.

The horrors of these Boxer days never really left him. To the end he bore the indelible impress upon his life and character, and he spoke feelingly and frequently of the martyrs of the Mission. On the occasion of the Mission's Jubilee he said :

“ Our jubilee celebration to-day is solemnised by the remembrance that during the last fifty years twenty-seven dear children and sixty-three beloved fellow-workers, ninety in all, make up the roll of martyrs in connection with this Mission. No Protestant Mission has ever had such a large number of martyrs. In this respect the China Inland Mission is unique. Six provinces, namely, Kweichow, Hunan, Shansi, Shensi, Chihli, and Chekiang, have all witnessed the departure of martyred spirits ascending to their Saviour, Who, standing at the right hand of God, received them as He did the first martyr, Stephen.”

While the Boxer crisis was the severest strain through which he passed, there were other not infrequent calls upon his strength and judgement ; such, for instance, were the Changsha riots of 1910, and the revolution of 1911-12, when, Mr. Hoste being in England, he had to bear the responsibilities of direction in the field. Happily he was possessed of great powers of endurance, of a tenacity of purpose which would not be dismayed even in the

darkest hour, combined with an unreserved willingness to sacrifice himself upon the altar of the Mission. What his steady unperturbed resolution and his spirit of consecration have meant to the Mission cannot easily be estimated.

And though his chief ministry lay in China his furloughs at home were in some cases singularly fruitful. In the summer of 1891, for instance, when he was staying at Dunbar with his family, he was brought into contact with a Mr. Gregg, father of Dr. Gregg of Manchuria, who at that time was acting as secretary to the Sabbath Observance Society. Mr. Gregg was in close correspondence with the late Mr. J. T. Morton, and through this apparently chance friendship Mr. Morton himself became interested in the work of the Mission; with a result that at his death he left one quarter of his residuary estate to the China Inland Mission, a sum which amounted to more than £160,000. What blessing has resulted to China through this gift no statistics can indicate. The work in every province of that great land has been materially and permanently assisted, and only that day can declare the spiritual harvests which have followed the unexpected and undesigned outcome of Mr. Stevenson's holiday at Dunbar.

During these thirty years and more of leadership Mr. Stevenson was almost wholly absorbed in the affairs of the Mission. "This one thing I do," was his motto through life, and in consequence he stood somewhat aloof from the gatherings of the Shanghai missionary community and from those posts of honour and usefulness to which that community

would most gladly have elected him. Nevertheless he took great interest in the work of the British and Foreign Bible Society and of the Chinese Tract Society, sharing in the work of their committees.

The Rev. G. H. Bondfield, the Bible Society's chief representative in China, wrote of him as follows :

“ I first met Mr. Stevenson about 1891, and I shall always be his debtor. Many times have I consulted him over early difficulties and always found him a sympathetic friend and wise counsellor. How greatly he has been honoured—so many endowments, such loyal service, so firm a faith and so triumphant a close to it all. A great worker and a great Christian—the inspiration of his life and character will be missed by the whole missionary body in China.”



THE LIGHTER SIDE OF HIS OFFICIAL LIFE

*To face page 75.*

## WHAT SURVIVES IS GOLD

Awhile in the earthen vessel  
The treasures of glory gleam ;  
In Heaven the fount eternal,  
In the desert the living stream.

And looking on Christ in glory,  
That glory so still, so fair,  
There passes a change upon me,  
Till I am as He who is there.

Then no more in the earthen vessel  
The treasure of God shall be,  
But in full and unclouded beauty,  
O Lord, wilt Thou shine through me.

Afar through the golden vessel  
Will the glory of God shine bright ;  
There shall be no need for the sunshine,  
For the Lamb shall be the light.

*From Hymns of Ter Steegan and Others.*  
(A favourite book of Mr. Stevenson.)

## WHAT SURVIVES IS GOLD

Youth ended, I shall try  
My gain or loss thereby ;  
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold :  
And I shall weigh the same,  
Give life its praise or blame :  
Young, all lay in dispute ; I shall know, being old.

R. BROWNING.

“ WHEN He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold,” wrote Job : “ The fire itself shall prove each man’s work of what sort it is,” wrote the Apostle Paul. Fifty odd years of missionary service, such as Mr. Stevenson lived, had been no light ordeal. It had been more than sufficient to test both the man and his work, and it is not too much to say, “ What survives is gold.”

Few men have known more of loneliness and separation from their loved ones than he, but he never allowed these things to deflect him from what he felt the path of duty. From the time of his first furlough his was practically a solitary life, for family claims kept Mrs. Stevenson in the home-country from that time onward. In 1891 one of his daughters went out to China to be his companion, but through a mysterious providence Mr. Stevenson had very shortly to bring her back to the home-country with seriously impaired health. This was a real heart

sorrow, for he had looked forward with much anticipation to the friendship and fellowship of her presence. And the death of both his sons and of two of his daughters, from whom he had been so long separated, materially added to the loneliness of his spirit, for he was a very affectionate husband and father.

In a letter to his wife dated September 14, 1915, the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage, he wrote :

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless  
His holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits ;  
Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.

“ DEAREST ANNIE—The above gives voice to my inmost feelings this morning as I think of all God’s goodness to us both since we were united in marriage fifty years ago.

“ Reviewing these years now past, I feel so grateful for all your steadfast faith in God and for the way you have put God’s claims and service in the forefront throughout these years, and also for the stimulus you have been to me to serve the Lord with my whole powers.

“ I recognise that in our married life your burden and self-sacrifice have been far greater than mine have been.

“ The toil and responsibility involved in connection with the upbringing of our dear children has been very great—chiefly resting upon your heart and mind. Often, too, in weak health and not a little anxiety and perplexity, but with the Lord’s gracious help you managed nobly and with wonderful

success, thus setting me free to give myself wholly to the Lord's work in China.

" I don't forget that I owe my life to your careful nursing when I was so ill in Shaohing long years ago.

" I trust that you will have a happy day on this our golden wedding. Friends on this Compound will be specially remembering you in prayer with thanksgivings to-day. I pray that God's consolations will be with you now in your weakness, and also as you recall the sorrows and trials that *He* has permitted to come to you during these fifty years.

" May God's presence and love refresh you. With congratulations and thanksgivings.—Believe me, your affectionate husband,

J. W. STEVENSON."

A few days later he wrote again acknowledging a cablegram from his loved ones at home which had put the top-stone on the celebration of his golden wedding :

" The greatest pleasure and joy that came to me on the fiftieth anniversary of my wedding was the receipt of your cablegram—which crowned all the other kind sentiments proffered by my more immediate friends. The message was duly received on the auspicious day. I felt what a happy man I was to have such loving and devoted children and grandchildren. My inmost heart affections were stirred to their inmost depths in overflowing gratitude to the Giver of all good for the extreme happiness I had in those so dear to me. The cablegram is a very striking landmark on my pathway and

will often be recalled with tender feelings and satisfaction as the shadows lengthen.

“On that day I invited friends to supper and I had the pleasure of welcoming fifty-seven who accepted my invitation. After the meal I gave an address telling of that far-off wedding feast in London and of certain incidents afterwards which I have reason to believe interested my guests. We had a couple of Scotch sacred melodies, ‘The Lord’s my Shepherd’ and ‘O God of Bethel,’ then friends gave expression to thanksgiving for all the mercies of the past and prayed for blessings upon my dear children and grandchildren. It was a very happy gathering, but, as I have already mentioned, your cablegram was supremely the crowning event of that memorable occasion.”

And these letters may be supplemented by extracts from two birthday letters addressed one to each of his two surviving daughters. To the elder he wrote :

“From earliest morning and all day thoughts and prayers for you have been affectionately occupying my mind and heart. How I have been thanking God for all His goodness and mercy to you all these years.

“A peculiar sense of tenderness, affection and solemnity comes over me as I think of you on this day.

“I send you my very warmest congratulations and best wishes for the New Year upon which you enter to-day. May it be the very best and happiest you have ever had. As I review all those many years my heart goes out in grateful praise to God

who has preserved you and blessed you with many mercies and surrounded you with His loving kindness. May you ever have a lively sense of His guiding hand in all your ways. My whole heart's affection to you."

To his youngest daughter, born at home, he wrote :

" Ever since I woke this morning I have been thinking of all your goodness, and I want not only to offer you my most reverential and grateful congratulations on this your birthday, but to say how truly I bless God for your birth and for all the years He has granted you to be a pillar of strength and source of comfort.

" Your dear mother and I both feel most grateful to the Giver of every good for the good gift He has given us in you, and that our path through this ' vale of tears ' has been smoothed and lighted up by your helpful and sympathetic ministry.

" For myself, as the years go by, I feel increasingly my obligation to you, and words seem inadequate to express all I feel, and in my advancing years my lot is greatly softened by the regular weekly epistle which cheers and helps me to bear the loneliness and separation from my dear ones.

" My joy would be to be with you especially on this your anniversary and give my greetings and good wishes in person rather than by letter, but you must regard them as none the less hearty and affectionate. That God will bless you very richly is the constant prayer of your affectionate father."

All children had a warm place in his affections. He was never too busy to suffer an interruption

from a child, and there were not many days at Shanghai when some child did not find his or her way to his office. Naturally his grandchildren had a special place in his heart, and many were the letters he addressed to them. One of these must suffice to show how he sought to enter into the child's mind and spirit :

May 5, 1905.

“ MY VERY DEAR WINIFRED, ANGUS, AND EVELYN —I want to thank you all very much for the beautiful birthday card you sent me. I will keep it very carefully, and as I look at it I will think of your kindness on my *sixty-first* birthday.

“ Do you know what I was doing on my birthday ? You could not guess. Well, if you have a map of China and look for Ganking—the capital city of the province of Ganhuei on the Yang-tsz-kiang—between this place and Hankow, you will see the city I was in on the morning of March 30.

“ I got up very early ; a photo was taken shortly after six of the seventeen young men students, with Mr. and Mrs. Wilcox and myself sitting in the centre. Perhaps you would like to see a copy of that photo and so I send you one. Then I started in a small boat with a big sail with two Chinese boatmen to travel down the Yang-tsz-kiang to a city called Chih-chow.

“ The sun was shining, and many boats were sailing on the river. The scene was delightful and most pleasing. We made good progress till suddenly about five o'clock a very big wind arose. Then we rocked and tossed about a great deal. The two poor boatmen had a hard time and worked very

hard to make the entrance of a small side river, which they did. Soon rain fell, and we had to finish the journey in the dark. So we slept on hard boards all night and got up early next morning and called on our friend who lives at Chih-chow. After staying for a few days, I again took a small boat to a busy town on the river, where about eleven o'clock at night I went on board a nice steamer. So you see I had a splendid picnic on my birthday. What fun we should have had if you three had only been with me!

"Thank you all very much for your nice letters. I am so glad you are all getting on so well.

"I hear that you have had your photo taken in your Chinese dress, and I am longing to see the photo. How funny you will look!

"Please give Baby a lot of kisses from me, and accept a great many for each one of you.

Your loving Grandpa,

J. W. STEVENSON."

But beyond the narrow circle of the family he had a great capacity for friendship:

"The official," wrote Mr. F. W. Baller, "was largely swallowed up in the father, and to a very large number of friends he was a counsellor and guide. People went freely to him with their troubles and difficulties, their perplexities, their joys and sorrows, and always found in him a warmth of sympathy and interest that was of the utmost value."

Two or three testimonies as to this must be representative of many others which could be quoted:

“ My memory,” wrote Mr. A. Orr Ewing, “ recalls vividly the warm welcome he ever extended to those returning to Shanghai from the interior, after arduous labours in the far interior. His hearty greeting, cordial hand-grip, and sympathetic enquiry, giving evidence of his interest and concern in the welfare of the workers, went far to strengthen the family bond which binds the Mission members to each other and to those in authority.”

Another member of the Mission, writing to Mr. Stevenson shortly after her wedding, said :

“ This is not a formal letter to the Director of the Mission, but a little note of grateful love to one who has been as a father. It is just wonderful to me to think over the past few years in Shanghai. What an enrichment it was to my life in friendship and in Christian love. Why should you have been so kind to a wee Scotch lassie ? I cannot understand it, but I am deeply grateful all the same. . . . I cannot express all that is in my heart as I remember you, but I think you understand it.”

But though he had a large and understanding heart few men were less governed by sentiment than he. Strong convictions and practical considerations were the controlling forces of his life, and these were the secret of that steadfastness of purpose which always characterised him. As a man he never spared himself, and was Spartan both in his spiritual and physical habits.

During his early years in Shanghai it was his custom regularly to fast on Fridays till supper and on Sundays till noon, and this was after more than twenty years' residence in the East. Subsequently

considerations of health compelled him to relax this stern habit of spiritual discipline, but it illustrates his zeal and unsparing devotion.

His tastes too were simple and his self-denial marked. As a steward of all God gave him he was scrupulously careful in expenditure of money on himself, though he was generous in his ministry to others, his gifts often being anonymous, as Mr. Stark, whom he sometimes employed as his almoner, testifies.

His habits were methodical in the extreme. His personal account books show the expenditure of every penny or its equivalent since 1864, while his diary was kept in an equally precise manner. There was even something humorous in the nature of some of the items he recorded. In addition he had an extraordinary memory, the dates and details of everything connected with the Mission being simply at his finger ends. Of this Mr. Hoste said, "His memory concerning people, transactions, even trivial things, was remarkable. They seemed to engrave themselves upon his mind."

"Another characteristic," to quote Mr. Hoste further, "was loyalty to his brethren. Nor was this a mere lip loyalty which, while professing fellowship, goes its own way in disregard of the obligations involved in a given relationship. . . . He was a man constantly governed by a sense of a divine vocation, and a man who was prepared practically to respond to the demands involved by the fulfilment of that vocation." He was also an example of hard work, while his faith and strength of purpose were an inspiration to many; he literally

toiled and spent himself in his work of faith and labour of love. At the time when the Mission was growing by leaps and bounds there was need of careful and courageous planning, and the call for practical qualities of administration and of business and financial ability. There was also a great deal of prayerful discernment and knowledge of men required in designating the hundreds of new workers to the stations which were then being opened. "Now it is a fact," said Mr. Hoste at his funeral, "that in God's providence Mr. Stevenson was the one who, for the most part, did that work, and those who have had a personal acquaintance with the difficulties attending upon opening up work in the interior of China some thirty or thirty-five years ago will be able to appreciate not only the steadfast devotion, the high Christian purpose of our dear brother, but his fine qualities as an administrator, as a leader of men and women."

On February 6, 1916, Mr. Stevenson celebrated at Shanghai the jubilee of his arrival in China. Though physically unequal to all the strenuous labours of his early days, he was not less keenly interested nor less devoted to the work. Though added years and diminished strength had compelled him to lay down part of his burden, his zeal was unabated. In 1886, when writing from Shansi, the days of enthusiastic meetings still fresh in his memory, he said, "I have seen and had intimate intercourse with all the 'seven,' and I am delighted to report that they are all getting on well. The climate of China has not lowered the temperature of consecration, but rather increased it, for which

I do praise God." The same might have been said of himself. More than fifty years in China had not abated his zeal for Christ nor his love for the people. In a personal letter acknowledging congratulations on the attaining of his jubilee in the field, he wrote :

" I really cannot fully express to you how I appreciate your loving letter conveying your congratulations and good wishes on the occasion of my jubilee in China. Please accept my heartfelt thanks for your all too generous sentiments and for your prayers for me in the days or years that the Divine purpose and grace have in store. My heart is deeply touched and humbled by all the love and appreciation manifested by my brethren both in and outside the Mission. . . . The words you pass on from the 139th Psalm are indeed most wonderful and most comforting. Oh, to understand more of the infinitely compassionate heart of our Heavenly Father and of the wealth of privilege and grace He has bestowed on those who truly trust in Him. I have seen not only great changes during the fifty years but have witnessed countless answers to prayer, and the guiding hand of God personally and especially in connection with the work of the China Inland Mission. . . . One longs for more whole-hearted devotion and greater and firmer grasp of the exceeding great and precious promises which He has so graciously given us. If more faith had been exercised what might we not have realised ? "

Mr. Stevenson was never greater than during the closing months of his life. Though he had been blessed with a vigorous constitution, the evening of his days was clouded with pain, though this was

made bright by his courage. "The brave Great-heart," as one friend wrote, "will not give in, and with true Scotch endurance will let no fuss be made." Yet he was conscious that his days of service were drawing to a close, as the following little incident, related by Miss Marchbank, shows.

Standing bareheaded by the side of Mr. Hudson Taylor's grave in Chinkiang, in the autumn or early winter of 1917, he said, "I was twelve years younger than Mr. Taylor; I came to China twelve years after him; and it is now twelve years since he died." That was all, but the remarks indicated that he was doubtless feeling that his days were numbered, that ere long he would join those who had predeceased him.

These closing months were full of suffering nobly borne. Not many months before his death, when Mr. Hoste was absent from Shanghai, he refused the drugs the doctor had ordered lest they might impair the clearness of his mind at a time when added responsibility rested upon him. As ever, the work came first, and pain could be borne rather than that his ministry should suffer. Thus was he

Never more keen than when his work was ending,  
Never more brave.

Years before he had, with characteristic humility, chosen one of the smallest rooms on the Mission compound in Shanghai for his personal use, and though urged to move to a more commodious room, for his closing days, he declined any change. Right up to the very day before his death he persisted in rising, and cheerfully expressed his hope of recovery,

though that was humanly impossible. The same dauntless resolution continued with him as long as life lasted.

The Home-call came at last on August 15, 1918, and the next day, mourned by all who knew him, both Chinese and foreigners alike, and amid many tokens of affectionate regard, he was lovingly laid to rest in the Bubbling Wells Cemetery at Shanghai. It was fitting that he should die as a soldier at his post and be buried on his field of battle. He had fought the good fight, he had finished the course, he had kept the faith, and henceforth there was laid up for him the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, would give him at that day. As we look back we shall continue to think of his life as complete and consistent. In the prime of his manhood he had answered the call of God to a path by no means easy, and that path, by God's grace, he had trodden without swerving right on to its goal :

He chose, as men choose, where most danger showed,  
Nor ever faltered 'neath the load  
Of petty cares that gall great hearts the most,  
But kept right on the strenuous uphill road.  
Strong to the end, above complaint or boast.

NO PAUSE FOR DEATH

Remember them that had the rule over you, which spake unto you the word of God; and considering the issue of their life, imitate their faith.—HEBREWS xiii. 7.

## NO PAUSE FOR DEATH

Carry on, and complete an adventure—

No work begun shall ever pause for death.

R. BROWNING.

WHEN Mr. Stevenson first arrived in China there were only fifteen Protestant mission stations, with a total of two hundred missionaries, including wives and single ladies, while the whole baptized community of Christians did not exceed three thousand persons. At that time all the interior provinces were absolutely without Protestant missionaries. To-day there are five thousand seven hundred Protestant missionaries in the field, located at nine hundred central stations with over six thousand out-stations, while the Church rejoices in nearly three hundred thousand baptized communicants with an equal number under regular Christian instruction. That is to say, Mr. Stevenson has personally witnessed the opening of the whole country to the Gospel, the multiplication of the missionary staff by nearly thirty-fold, and the multiplication of Church membership one hundred-fold. That one person should be spared to see these things literally accomplished was no small privilege.

But though we rejoice in what one man has seen,  
we need to

Look at the end of the work, contrast  
The petty Done, the vast Undone.

For every member of the Christian Church in China there are a thousand persons who have not yet confessed Christ; and if all the Scriptures circulated in that land since Dr. Morrison landed in Canton, more than a hundred years ago, were in existence to-day, they would only suffice to provide one person in forty with so much as a Gospel portion. The task of preaching the Gospel to every creature is still far from being fulfilled, and there is as much call for self-denying service as there ever was.

It is easy to look back and rejoice in what has been accomplished, but the conquests of the Cross have entailed the bearing of the Cross in suffering, hardships, riots, massacres, and deaths. And we know all too well, to-day, that all warfare demands sacrifice. Yet how small is the Church's sacrifice compared with what the nations have been willing to pay for victory. The contrast is humiliating. Great Britain alone has counted not the lives of three-quarters of a million of her sons too much to give in the great cause so recently fought out in Europe; whereas the Church can only send forth a mere handful of men and women to make known the great Name apart from which there is no salvation. Surely the war which has shadowed the world, and the sacrifices which have been so willingly made, should "shame our timidity and our tame trifling with duty, and call us to deal with

life as a reality, and with the work of Christ in the world as worth more devotion than national honour or commercial advantage or racial pride." Every soldier who has died for his country, and every home which has given of its best, "is a summons and a reproach to us men and women who have accepted the Christ of the Cross but not the Cross of the Christ."

Present days are difficult and the problems of life perplexing, but no halt has been called to the campaign of Christ. There can be no armistice with evil. It has recently been told of Marshal Foch, when word was brought him, in the critical days of the recent war, that the Allied armies could not hold on any longer, that he replied, "I cannot hold on; well then, I attack." The result is known to the world.

Such courage and such daring are naturally applauded, and the venture of faith of those who founded the modern missionary enterprise in face of every discouragement is approved by us to-day. But we do well to ask ourselves if we possess the same faith and daring as they. If not, as it has been defined, "the repetition of a creed after it has become a phrase by the cooling of that white-hot conviction which once made it both the light and warmth of the soul," it becomes us who repeat and approve the creed of foreign missions to see that we possess the reality and not the phrase alone. The new perils and new dangers which confront us to-day call aloud for a faith which reckons on the living God and which ventures all in obedience to His commands.

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*General Director*—D. E. HOSTE.

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