

## Opening a New Station

AS it fell to the lot of the writer to open and build up a mission station—the last one on our field—we shall relate a few of the experiences in connection with that undertaking.

It was a historic day for the old and aristocratic city, when a young foreigner was impudent enough to come and settle in it. Up to that time the natives had held to all that which was old, and shied from everything new.

The city, however, was not entirely unacquainted with mission work, since it had been visited by missionaries from a neighboring mission station. Three native workers had also in succession been placed in the city. The first of these did not dare to appear on the street. The second ended in jail. The third was still in the city but was utterly helpless in face of the opposition of the people. It was not strange, therefore, that the young missionary, who had only been in China for little more than a year, felt ill at ease.

Most of the townsfolk had seen foreigners before, but they could not imagine one settling in their city, so they all turned out to see the intrepid person. Most of their faces seemed to express the thought: "Poor man! You must have been extremely disobedient to have been driven from home at such an early age." The foreigner's shoes, clothes, etc., were carefully examined, and finally he was solemnly pronounced a man, though a barbarian. Then, they had to examine his belongings. "Who had ever seen anything like this? Who had ever heard of iron stoves or wire beds? And what did he keep in all those boxes? Foreigners have a reputation for their ability to shoot—maybe he has guns along." So the people had to view the contents of those boxes. "What? No guns? Only books! Well, then, there must be some learning among the barbarians, too! Wonder if he has heard about our Confucius or Lao-tse? Probably not—

When they had satisfied their curiosity, the crowd quickly vanished—but they were back before the missionary was out of bed the next morning. Holes, which could easily be made in the paper windows, made excel-

lent peep holes. The people never seemed to get over their curiosity. Even the aristocracy came, presumably for the purpose of expressing their joy that a teacher from the West had come to the city, but in reality to satisfy their inquisitiveness. At the time the missionary did not understand many things Chinese, yet he sensed the questioning among the people about him.

Even the mayor of the city dropped in on his way back from the temple, and promised to send a company of soldiers to guard the house. This offer was politely refused.

When finally the crowds began to grow smaller, the missionary could begin to take stock of his surroundings. His house was a little Chinese hut, about twenty feet long and eight feet wide. It served as bedroom, sitting room, office, and kitchen. Even though the people came in smaller numbers than earlier, the missionary was not alone in his room. A gang of rats was in possession of it before he arrived, and they were not in mind to evacuate for anybody. At night the rats took liberty to scamper over the iron bed until it shook.

But not everyone came to stare at the stranger. Some people came for the purpose of asking questions about the new teaching, and the new way of life. Most of them were only pretenders. One man acted in a very pious manner. Whenever he was served tea, he always lifted the cup and gave thanks before he drank it. One evening this man wanted to have a private interview. No, he was not concerned about his soul; he asked if he could not have a job with the missionary. When that request was refused the man left for good. Some of the most "warm hearted" of the inquirers failed to show up when they learned that no work could be obtained. The number of the people who came to hear the Word decreased, but the few who continued to come gave good promise.

One day when the missionary returned from the railway station, he found, to his great surprise, that the good cook was lying unconscious on the floor, with his mouth wide open. It was reported that the poor boy had suddenly become ill.

WHEN the adjoining room was entered the missionary found the evangelist and the most promising catechumens in the same dire condition. "So many taken sick at the same time! What shall this come to," mused the foreigner. All of a sudden the truth dawned upon him: they were all drunk! And intoxicated they were, every one of them. An investigation was held. The cook blamed the evangelist, and the evangelist blamed it to the devil and on a fine gentleman from the street. The incident served as an eye opener to the missionary.

From the very beginning meetings were held every evening in a little rented street chapel, and three meetings on every Sunday. At some of these meetings one's patience nearly came to an end. People came in and went out at their own pleasure. Many came inside only to have a gaze at the stranger, and after having made some loud remarks they left. Articles of every description were carried along into the chapel, one his wares, another his barber outfit, others again their implements and tools. These people laughed, talked, joked, smoked, quarreled and swore. Frequently some of them came forward to get a square look at the missionary. Those who sat down went to sleep. Women brought along their work and their pipes; children frolicked about without any supervision.