

ON TO CHINA

1906 - 1911

More reminiscences for my family

Newton E. Bowles, 1964

On to China

Apart from the convention I have very few memories of Nashville. I had only once before been in an American city. Sherlock, J.K. Smith and I visited the Panamerican Fair in Buffalo. However, owing to the habit our American friends have of shooting their Presidents, our visit was a very brief one. We arrived early noon to hear of the tragedy in the shooting of President McKinley and that the fair was to be temporarily closed at midnight. However we made the best of the afternoon and evening and decided the trip was well worth while. Pardon the digression and we will return to Nashville. I was billeted with Fred Langford but the billet was so far from the convention hall that we found a near-by boarding house. My clearest remembrance of it is that at breakfast, dinner and supper hot biscuits took the place of bread. When we asked if we could have some bread they seemed much surprised but answered in the affirmative. In due time the bread arrived but it was so soggy and unpalatable that we were glad to return to the daily triple feast of hot biscuits.

I suppose we saw only the poorer parts of Nashville for from what we saw it struck me as a run-down, half dead, unprogressive city.

One event of the home journey I do remember. It was arranged that our train should stop at the famous Kentucky Mammoth Cave. As I recall it, the stop was made where there was no station at all. The cave is too well known to require any words of mine. When we emerged toward evening there was considerable time to wait for our train. There was lots of fuel lying around and soon we had a fine bonfire around which we sat and sang. My memory is not too clear as to what we sang but I think at first it was college songs etc., but as the evening twilight deepened the choice fell on hymns, which was natural in view of our experience the last few days. Even of these I have a clear remembrance of only one which was probably the last one we sang. I am sure that none of you my children have ever heard it but it was familiar to me in my early childhood. It was "Shall we gather at the river". I have been trying in vain to recall at least one verse but all I can be sure of is the chorus which was -

"Yes we'll gather at the river
The beautiful, the beautiful river,
Gather with the saints at the river
That flows by the throne of God"

I can't imagine a group of modern college students making use of this hymn or any hymn like it. However that may be, it fitted in somewhat naturally under the circumstances. As a group we had been passing through a soul-searching experience, an experience which to a great extent would affect all our future. Though many of us were almost strangers one to the other, a peculiar bond of unity had come to us. Now we were to separate even in some cases to the uttermost ends of the earth. Many of us would never meet again, not in this life anyway. Would we ever meet anywhere?

The preacher in me tempts me to say that probably nothing reveals more clearly the church's attitude to certain vital subjects than do the hymns of 'Yesterday' and the hymns of 'To-day'. When I was a boy the hymns about the future life were often sung - not so to-day. It is not at all my thought to touch on the great question of a future life, but wherever the truth lies, our forefathers had a vital, triumphant note about death which now has been largely lost. I suppose like Tennyson we have moved from his island of Avilon:

"Where falls not hail, nor rain or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer seas"

to his:

"We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee.
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

The convention over, the decision made, it probably was fortunate that the preparation to write about ten exams pushed the adjustment to my changed future more or less into the background. The spring of 1906 saw the end of my college days and with the exams all safely passed I had more time to ponder what lay before me. Four of us volunteers, two for Japan and two for China, under the auspices of the Missionary Board, spent a little over two months visiting churches mostly in western Ontario and, of course, speaking on Missions. In most places we spent a whole week and, besides taking the two Sunday services, had a meeting every week night save Saturday. To-day, I am sure, attendance at such services in the summer would be very, very small but, while we were rarely crowded, we did have a goodly number at our meetings.

That work over I returned to Brampton where father and mother, Unett and I made up the household. I had a very busy fall. For one thing I studied and wrote some three or four exams on my B.D. course. There was, of course, considerable buying and other preparation for life in China. Also there were frequent calls to go here or there to speak at meetings, some of these taking the form of a farewell. Two of these stand out in my memory. One was in Victoria College for a group of us who were soon to leave for overseas service. This in part was decidedly hilarious and we were carried around on the shoulders of fellow students as if we were really heroes. The other was in Trinity Church under the auspices of the Epworth leagues of the Toronto West District who had adopted me as their missionary and were raising my support. At this meeting one who was to become my life partner was present but I am sure neither of us had the slightest idea that this was the case.

Probably it was a good thing that I was thus very busy. All the dreams and plans I had had as to my life and its activities had been overthrown and a new and strange future lay before me. There was absolutely no faltering in the decision I had made but I confess there were a few troubled, lonely moments, some of them with aspects too personal to be recorded here.

I remember well the morning I left home. I was leaving in advance of the other members of our party in order to visit my three brothers in Manitoba. It was the morning of November the twelfth 1906. Father and mother, who were both proud and sorry to see me go, refrained pretty well from showing how concerned they were but one could not call it a cheerful household. It is odd how a little unimportant thing often remains in one's memory. I recall how in finishing the packing father stepped on a tray used for developing photographs and how very greatly it disturbed him. He wanted to hasten down town to purchase another one and I had hard work to persuade him that that was not necessary. Mother, who was not in very good health at the time, had a presentiment that she would never see me again. I am sure my leaving home for China was harder on them than on me. We lived near the station so we borrowed a wheelbarrow and thus transported all my baggage to the depot. The train came in - the train pulled out - and I was off on the great adventure of my life.

As it happened Unett was not at home that morning. She, if I remember rightly, was in Toronto in connection with a position she had with the Torrington's Conservatory of music. However she was at the Union Station, Toronto, to see me off and I think she had a harder time than my parents to keep back the tears. I was also delightfully surprised that about a dozen of my college friends had taken the trouble to come down thus revealing their friendship and good wishes for my future.

I am sure that you my children, and any other moderns who have enough perserverance to read through these wandering memories, will wonder at the degree of feeling connected with my leaving for China. Possibly my Irish-Cornish heritage had something to do with this on my part, but it was much more than that. Nowadays one gets on a plane and takes a trip to some far-off corner of the earth and everyone is comparatively nonchalant about it. But 1964 is vastly different to 1906. Speed has revolutionized travel and made even the most distant lands our next door neighbour.

Beside this, my going to China was presumably not just a trip, but a life time adventure. Further, while I can truthfully say that the Boxer rebellion with its slaughter of missionaries and Chinese Christians, did not at all trouble me, yet it was recent enough to affect the attitude of many in their anxiety for their friends who were going to live there.

Of my trip across the continent little needs to be said. I had been having a lot of dental work done and a very sore tooth marred the trip as far as Winnipeg. I did not see Manly as he was somewhere in the States taking a course in orthodontia but his good wife welcomed me. Then down to Morden to visit Sherlock, Maggie and family. An early blizzard almost kept me there but we managed to get to the depot and got back to Winnipeg and on to Souris to visit John, Vinia and family. The weather continued cold and stormy. I had to make connection with the transcontinental at Brandon. The train from Souris landed me there sometime about four pm when I was told that the transcontinental was delayed by the storm, and would be a few hours late. As a matter of fact it did not arrive until near morning and I had a long, dull time waiting in the station. Wesley Morgan, one of my best college friends, who like myself was on his way to China, was on this train and the rest of the way to Vancouver was pleasant and uneventful. I might say that this was my first glimpse of real mountains and I,

as it were, fell in love with them. They put a sort of magic charm on me - a magic that was to be greatly increased by the mountains of China.

There was a delay of a few days in the sailing of our steamer which was one of the early Empress boats of the C.P.R. I was asked to go ahead to Victoria to speak in the First Methodist Church on Sunday. On Monday Rev. Adams (not the Adams I knew at Laural) kindly insisted that we go to a Chinese restaurant and have a Chinese dinner. What they brought me was a large bowl of something called chowchow, supposedly a Chinese dish. Well, China is a big country and possibly in some part they indulge in food of that kind, but in all my years in China, and having eaten hundreds of Chinese meals, I never came across anything that faintly resembled chow-chow. I did not like it but trusting to my digestion I gallantly ate it all. Possibly this had something to do with the misery that was soon to be my lot. It was almost dark when the Empress arrived and at last our whole gang was together. It consisted of six married couples, three W.M.S. ladies and three bachelors. The three bachelors were Edward Wallace, Wesley Morgan and myself and we had been very close friends during our college days. This was by far the largest group of new missionaries the Methodist Church had ever sent overseas. It was remarked in our church paper that we were a new type of missionary for instead of singing hymns we sang the old college song 'My father sent me to Victoria'. I was ready for the bountiful dinner that followed and ate heartily. Then Ed and I walked the deck for quite a considerable time and I remember remarking to him that I was sure I was going to enjoy this ocean trip very much. In due time we went down to our stateroom. I sat down on the bed, leaned over to pick up my valise and suddenly everything went wrong. There is no use trying to tell the horrors of a bad attack of sea sickness to one who has never experienced it. I think it was the third day that I, or what was left of me, crawled out on the deck and about another four days before I ventured into the dining room. Those four days I ate out on the deck having found three things my stomach did not reject - soda biscuits, calery and olives. This last I had formerly rather disliked. The latter part of the journey was enjoyable and by the time we reached Japan I was back to normal living. I well remember the evening we reached Yokohama. One of our missionaries to Japan met us at the dock. Rickshas were called and instructions given. We were to see a little of the city and then to meet at a certain restaurant. This was my first touch with a city of

the Far East. It was all so strange and foreign to me that I had, as it were, to pinch myself to see if I would not wake up and find it all a dream. I got separated from all but one of our party (I think it was Hal Robertson). Our ricksha men suddenly stopped before an extra fine building and motioned us to enter. Well we looked in and found a bevy of nicely dressed Japanese maidens sitting in a half circle on the floor and smiling a most welcome 'Come on boys'. We beat a hasty retreat wondering if the ricksha men had found this was the place which most foreigners passing through Yokohama desired to find. We had a jolly time at the restaurant where each one roasted a piece of steak over a charcoal fire. I would like to add that the sail through the Japanese sea, dotted as it was with the white sails of innumerable fishing boats, was entrancingly beautiful. On the last day of the ocean voyage I was playing a game of shuffleboard when someone called out 'There's China'. We immediately stopped playing and I hastened to get my first glimpse of the land of my adoption. All that was to be seen was what looked like a mudbank jutting out into the ocean. But it was China and I forgot all about the game and leaning over the ship's railing I gazed and gazed, pondered and wondered for a long time.

We had about a week in Shanghai stopping at a home the China Inland Mission had for the accommodation of missionaries on their travel to inner China. There was a lot of shopping to be done, some for ourselves, more for our people in West China. I indulged in two or three summer suits of white duck which were made to order and were extremely cheap. I had my first real Chinese meal, saw something of the foreign concessions and the Chinese city. The contrast was great but I fear none of us grasped the true significance of this. It was to be brought home to us before we left China.

The next stage of our journey was taken on a well-equipped Yang Tsi river steamer which was bound for Hankow. The river, for a good number of miles, was so wide it seemed more like a lake than a river. Jimmie Wallace, a good college friend, who was with the Y.M.C.A. in Nankin, had invited us three bachelors to stop off and visit him, an invitation we gladly accepted. However the fates stepped in to keep me from ever seeing Nankin. I developed a very nasty cold with considerable fever and the doctor of our party, Frank Allen, used his authority to forbid my going. I suppose that was wise but I have always regretted that I never saw China's ancient capital.

We arrived in Hankow on Christmas Day. Two hotels had been recommended to us. One, the smaller of the two, gave a reduction to missionaries so to it we went. When it came to the assigning of rooms it was found that there was accommodation for all save the lone bachelor, so I made my way to the other hotel. I had one advantage over the others in that I had turkey, cold not hot, for dinner. This was my first Christmas away from home. No matter where I was I had always found my way home for Christmas and to be alone in a strange hotel in a foreign land was, to put it mildly, not at all conducive to the making of a merry Christmas. There being nothing else to do I went early to my room. There was really nothing to find fault with except the room somehow was not a bit homelike and besides was decidedly chilly. I enquired about a fire and was told I could have one in the grate at a modest extra charge. However the fire when it was started was of the nature that produced much more smoke than heat. I crawled into bed and dreaming of former Christmases and far off friends finally fell asleep.

We had two interesting days in Hankow and then being joined by my two fellow bachelors we all took boat for Ichang. On this part of the journey we travelled by daylight only. The weather was fine and I remember this part of our trip as being especially pleasant. We arrived at Ichang on New Year's Day, 1907. Here again the C.I.M. had a home where missionaries travelling through could be entertained. It was much smaller and more poorly furnished than the one in Shanghai which necessitated our looking up our trunk or box wherever we had packed bedding. The story is told by one lady who was shown into a room where there was nothing but some absolutely necessary furniture (and not much of that - no mattress or bedding) but on the wall there was a motto 'The Lord will provide'. However Mr. Squire, who was in charge of the place, was kindly disposed, and did the best he could to make us comfortable and being missionaries there really was nothing that we should complain about. Here Dr. Cox came all the way from his station at Rensheo to take charge and guide us up the river which was the more difficult part of the journey. Ichang was near the mountains that characterize considerable of West China and somehow, in some marvellous way, working through long, long ages, the river had made for itself a way through. In this sometimes the river broadened out and flowed more or less placidly on its way; again it narrowed down and ran swiftly through narrow gorges or dashed its foaming way

down raging rapids. Up to this time no steamer had ascended this river. A German steamer did try but went down at the first rapid. Later, stronger and more powerful steamers were to succeed in travelling up this river but it was ours to travel by the age old houseboat. The motive power for these was the really remarkable Chinese tracker with an occasional help when the river ran more calmly. Then, if the wind were favorable, the sails were hoisted. Such occasions were few and far between. May I say I was, and still am, very glad that I had this houseboat trip. It was not all a picnic but on the whole it was both unique and enjoyable. I would not have missed the experience for a good deal. Dr. Cox probably did not find it so enjoyable for upon him fell the full responsibility which I was later to learn was no small matter. Just to rent the boats was a tedious business. It was thought that four would be sufficient but the amount of luggage was so great that a fifth, but smaller one was also needed. It took two weeks to accomplish all that had to be done. Then at last, late one afternoon, we made the start, but first the sacrificial rooster had to be slain and the blood sprinkled on the prow of the boat to appease the river demons. I think it was the next day we reached the first rapid. Just here at the risk of being redundant may I say that the spice of danger in the rapids, the grandeur of the gorges, the fact of so much that was new and strange, and not least the perfect harmony and fellowship of the whole group, made this part of our long journey to West China one of interest and pleasure. This was true though it does not mean that there were no times of sober thought and meditation.

Now back to our first rapid. At these rapids extra trackers had to be hired - the number being a hundred more or less depending on the force of the rapid. Now if only I had the letters I sent home I would be able to tell you the names of the rapids and something about them. I have often wished I had them for I think one's first letters from a country, if not always most correct, are apt to be the most interesting. But alas they are gone. But I have a fairly clear memory of this the first rapid we had to ascend. For one thing there were so many boats anchored waiting their turn it was not till the morning of the fourth day that our turn came. That night we were anchored if not in the rapid proper, yet where there was a great rush of water that swayed our boat up against the rocks with bumps that continued all the night. In the morning we discovered that quite a hole had been punched in the side of the boat but fortunately just above the water line. As a

matter of safety we were told not to stay on the boat but to walk along the track that the trackers used. The rush of the water was so strong that at times one wondered which was going to win - the trackers or the rushing river. A broken rope or a faltering on the part of the trackers could mean a real disaster. We breathed a sigh of relief when the last of our boats made the ascent in safety. I am sure that after this we took rapids, as it were, in our stride with scarce a thought of danger. What makes me sure of this is that at one rapid Ed Wallace and I decided we would like to know just what it was like to ascend a rapid on the boat. We got off when the others did and then sneaked back on. There really wasn't much to it. The boat seemed to be trembling all the time but moved slowly and steadily along. How we change! Now in my advanced years I avoid unnecessary danger like a cat avoids water. Two other incidents of the journey come to my memory. Our boat turned out to be the worst of the flotilla. It was old, and some of the timbers none too sound. As a result we woke up one morning to find our boat had sprung a leak. Fortunately we had anchored on a shallow sandy beach but not so shallow but that the hold of the boat was pretty well filled with water. As the boats always anchored together all hands came to the rescue. There was much pulling and tugging - out came trunks and boxes. Fortunately it was a bright sunny day. A clothes line was somehow stretched along the shore and soon all sorts of clothes, linens, etc. were flapping in a slight breeze. I have somewhere a shot of the six of us who called this boat our home. In it we are standing in a line in front of the clothesline and I am sure we do not look at all like a disconsolate group. Incidentally I look the most like a tough but of more significance is the fact that only I and possibly Mrs. Robertson are alive today.

About four pm on another afternoon our boat ran upon a submerged rock which punched a hole in its bottom and as a matter of course the water began to pour in. Quick work on our part in getting up trunks and boxes, plus the fortunate fact that the rock kept our boat from sinking to any great depth, meant that in this case we suffered but little from the soaking of our clothes etc. Hence the problem of drying things was small but the problem of getting the boat off the rock with the hole safely plugged was a really difficult one. This meant at least three things. First there had to be a temporary plugging of the hole. Second, the boat must be lightened so that it could be moved off the rock without

tearing a larger hole in its bottom. The third involved a more permanent plugging of the hole. To accomplish all this a considerable portion of our goods had to be taken to the shore. From somewhere a small boat was secured and by nightfall this was accomplished. It did not seem sensible to leave the stuff unguarded and Ed Wallace and Wes Morgan were the heroes chosen for this task. Taking a plentiful supply of blankets they were the fortunate ones having a restful and uneventful night. Mr. and Mrs. Robertson found refuge in one of the other boats. Dr. Cox and I remained on the boat and for us there was neither rest nor sleep until early dawn. The actual method to be followed in plugging the breach, of course, belonged to the captain. At long last he had his preparations all made. The contraption he had made to us looked anything but substantial, but as a matter of fact, once it got properly fixed in its place, it answered the purpose very well. Next came the really tricky part of the whole performance and that was to remove the temporary plug, install the permanent one and to do this so quickly as to avoid any large inrush of water. I was not at the moment down in the hold (which, as I remember it, was somewhere about five or six feet in depth) but I was watching carefully from above. Once the temporary plug was removed there came an unexpected large, mad rush of water. I noticed that a lighted lantern on the floor of the hold was about to be flooded which would leave the hold largely in the dark. In my haste to get down and pick it up I somehow lost my balance and took a header for the bottom. I only saved myself from a very nasty fall by being able to grasp a cross beam which enabled me to land on my feet instead of on my head. Immediately someone shouted to get the trackers who were asleep on the outer front part of the boat. As I hastily scrambled out of the hold I realized the only way to get a quick response would be to give them a baptism of water. I grabbed the first available utensil (which chanced to be what in the good old days we sometimes called a chamber mug) and soon aroused a goodly number of them. Some helped the captain at fixing the plug in place while the others started bailing out the water. Yes, finally we won the battle with very little damage from the water. With one thing and another it was dawning daylight when I found time to rest. But where? I stretched myself out on a nondescript pile of various things. I distinctly remember how one part protruded most uncomfortably into my anatomy. Later investigation proved this to be a typewriter.

Much more could be written about this houseboat trip but we will limit it to a few brief remarks. Yes, we had a Chinese teacher for each boat and we, one and all, made our first attempt toward learning the strange Chinese language. However everything was so new and interesting, we loved so much to take long walks when the weather etc., permitted - and there was altogether so much 'going on' that I am sure none of the teachers was overburdened. We kept the Sabbath Day in what the modern age would call the old-fashioned way. We found some time for worship, reading and meditation. Nevertheless, as we learned later, the missionaries whom we had the privileges of meeting at several mission stations gave the almost unanimous verdict that a new type of missionary had arrived in China and were rather fearful as to how we would stand the realities of missionary work and life. We were altogether too light-hearted and exuberant. Mr. Squires of Ichang, who finally became quite an admirer of our group, felt it his duty to warn us that we did not know what was facing us. That was quite true - we didn't but, even had we known, I do not think any one of us would have faltered nor would we have let far off clouds darken the sunshine of these days. As for myself while enjoying these experiences to the full, it does not mean that there were no serious, quiet, lonesome moments. Along another line there began on this trip nasty attacks of diarrhea, a trouble that was to bother me much during my years in China and, probably, the loss of about thirty pounds in weight. Also the day we were due in Kiating I had my first attack of lumbago, the forerunner of a type of trouble that bothered me occasionally for about forty years.

Pleasant and interesting as this houseboat trip had been, I am sure all of us were glad when after two and a half months we finally reached Kiating on or about March 31st. Concerning our stay in Kiating my memory is decidedly hazy. For this I am inclined to blame the attack of lumbago. It crippled me badly even keeping me in bed for part of the time. I do remember that I was the guest of Dr. Charles and Mrs. Service. Also how lying in bed Sunday forenoon I heard the children in the Sunday school sing a hymn that took me faster than the speed of light to a rural church some 10,000 miles away where as a child I joined in singing that same hymn. The hymn was 'Whosoever will may come'. The fact that it was being sung in Chinese made no difference. It was, as it were, I and the children who were childhood friends who were singing it in the basement of Ceasar's Church on the south-west corner of the junction of the Fourth Concession East and

the 'thirty-second side road of the township of Chingaucousy, Ontario, Canada.

About five days later a group of us left Kiating to finally end our journey at the station to which we had been appointed. That for me meant Ren Sheo. This was my first chair ride through the China countryside. I have decided to mention only the memory I have of a considerable portion of the first day's journey. We passed through a hilly district but not one of steep high hills, rocks and barren hillsides. It was the very opposite of this. The road wound through lovely narrow valleys abounding with a great variety of semi-tropical verdure. This was true also of the hillsides which were covered with shrubs and trees - these latter not huge and lofty but though comparatively small, possessed such unusual charm and beauty as well might have inspired the poem -

'I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree'

When I add that frequently a stream, babbling its way along, added a song of music you perhaps can understand how it all appealed to me as something idyllically beautiful - a sort of fairy land.

Not to spoil the above, other and different aspects of travel in China in those days may well be postponed.

My first year on the Mission Field

If I were asked to give a year-by-year account of my life on the mission field it would be an almost impossible task. Most of the years, more or less, blend into one another with only the occasional one standing out, marked with some significance. However there is one year that stands out from all the others and that one is my first year in West China. This not because of any outstanding or remarkable incident but because of the change of environment it brought to me and its contrast to the years that followed. I have debated long as to whether this justifies it being given a place in this rambling account and finally decided it is distinct enough to be included.

So come with me to Ren Sheo, a fairly large, unwalled, market town, the capital of a thriving county, with an unusual number of markets. It consisted almost entirely of one long street running through a valley with really high hills on either side. There was little in it of architecture or beauty to recommend it. Part way up one of the hill sides were the Residence and School

of the Women's Missionary Society and the Residence for the General Board Missionary. Down in the valley, right on the street, was the church and hospital. This building was formerly a Chinese inn which a few years previously in a time of unusual popularity, had been given to our Mission by the Chinese. I was a paying guest in the home of Rev. and Mrs. A.C. Hoffman who, with their two quite small children, lived in the hillside residence. They were exceedingly kind and did their best to help the rookie missionary in his adjustment to life in China. The English-speaking adult population was small, if I remember aright, just eight of us. The only task assigned to me by Council was the study of the Chinese language and this, aided by a Chinese teacher who knew no English, I diligently tried to do. I soon found that the time I could profitably give to that task was limited. For one thing the continuous looking at Chinese characters tended to make my eyes ache. Having done my stint of study for the day there was time left for something else. I started the study of two subjects on my B.D. course which I wrote the following spring, thus getting my degree. But that was not the recreation I needed. Everyone was so busy with their various duties that there was not much leisure for social getting together. For exercise I took to walking mostly up and down the high hill behind our house. Then there was a little used grass tennis court but only very occasionally was there anyone to play with. The few games I did have worked out to my disadvantage. During my last year at college I had the misfortune to badly bruise my right heel. It bothered me a lot at first but seemed to be perfectly cured before I left Canada. Tennis was then a new game to me and using tennis shoes apparently did not give the protection needed. At any rate it brought the soreness all back again and I went limping around. Finally got crutches made which I used, not all the time, but quite considerably. Later I found that an instep support gave relief and gradually cure. Meantime I was handicapped so I bought a horse. He was just the size of a large pony but a handsome and peppy little fellow. With him I roamed the nearby countryside. It was on the long dark winter evenings that I felt most lost as to what to do. Reading material was scarce. Finally I sent home for a violin. It really helped to relieve the monotony and, believe it or not, in the course of time, and if you had a keen ear for music, you could almost surely tell what I was trying to play. Of course I attended the Chinese services regularly and these gradually took on more

significance to me. I distinctly remember one or two things that gave a little variety to my life. One was the Christmas feast given by the church for the poor of the vicinity. Of course I had read of the poverty in which multitudes of Chinese were said to exist. I had already noticed that some were apparently living on a very low standard, one which was not far from malnutrition. But what I saw that day was a revelation of a depth of poverty that has to be seen to realize how dire it could become. Here they came, the halt, the lame, the blind, the diseased, in filthy garments and visible blemishes. Old folk unable to walk carried on the backs of helpers - little children thin and emaciated. Just where they came from I do not know for except for an occasional beggar there was very little sign of such poverty to be seen as one walked the street of the town. A touch of ancient biblical past came to my attention. When a Chinese was asked how many had attended the feast he answered stating a certain number of men beside the women and children.

Later that day we missionaries amid comfort and cleanliness feasted on an abundance of the best of food. The contrast was worth thinking about.

That Christmas Day is remembered by me for another reason. Mail came to Ren Sheo about nine times a month and it so chanced that Christmas evening I received nineteen letters from the homeland. They came from my home folk and from college friends and others. Needless to say I read them all and a few of them I read over and over several times. In one way this made an ideal ending for Christmas Day but to be honest I may confess that it brought a real attack of nostalgia.

The other incident that broke the regular routine was one day Dr. Cox said to me 'Newton, I have two patients in the hospital on whom I think I should operate and I want you to give the anaesthetic.! What! I who had never even been in an operating room to give the anaesthetic! At first it sounded too absurd to be worth considering but while a bit fearful the idea rather intrigued me so I said if he thought I would be of any help I was willing to do what I could. On the appointed day I made my appearance in the operating room which was as unlike a modern operating room as you could possibly imagine but it was under conditions such as this that our doctors in those days had to carry on their work. I followed directions as carefully as I could. The first operation was removing some dead bone from the leg of a young lad and as far as I know was

successful. The second was on a man who had been shot. When we got him under the anaesthesia, and Dr. Cox started to examine as how best to proceed, the man had such a bad hemorrhage that he decided it was best not to attempt an operation. Possibly today in a modern hospital with skilled surgeons and nurses, blood transfusions etc., the man's life could have been saved but not under the conditions that existed then in our mission hospitals. By the way, do you think that, on the strength of that day's experience, I would be justified in speaking of myself as an experienced anaesthetist?

Just one more matter and the record of my first year is finished. Somewhere about mid-winter 1908 I found myself lying awake in bed seeking sleep that would not come until the night was almost spent. I said nothing about this for a time thinking that nature would work out a cure. As it got worse rather than better I finally spoke to Dr. Cox. He gave me a sedative. It helped not at all. A second and stronger one likewise failed. Then he brought another which he cautioned me to use sparingly and only when absolutely required. Each night I sought sleep but always without success until taking this medicine. Though it put me to sleep it did nothing to cure my insomnia. In looking back I have wondered much as to the cause of my trouble. I am sure my physical condition could not by itself account for it. Though I had had nasty attacks of something in the nature of intestinal flu and a stubborn cold or two, yet these, though quite annoying and generally bad enough to considerably curtail my language study, still were never serious enough to cause me any particular anxiety. How then account for this prolonged attack of insomnia. I am not a psychologist and do not know the right 'jargon' in which to express my idea but my explanation is something like this. Somewhere down in my subconscious being there had been a struggle going on in the matter of adjusting myself to life in China. This struggle was just as real as if I had been clearly conscious of it. Its consequence was also just as real which meant that it had created in me a degree of hidden discord that was destructive to that inner quietness of spirit that is conducive to natural sleep. I think there is some evidence to support my idea in the fact that, when in the spring I went up to Chengtu to attend the Annual Mission Council, my insomnia disappeared at once.

The Council, much to my surprise, stationed me at Kiating. I know not why the change was made but have always suspected it was at the suggestion of Dr. Cox who probably thought a change would be good for me. Thus ended my first year in a mission station.

Kiating was a fairly large and quite important walled city picturesquely situated at the junction of two rivers. The American Baptists and the C.I.M. also had workers here. In looking back I am sure that the problem of adjustment to China now faded into the background. There was more than one reason for this but I think the main one was that by this time I knew enough Chinese to enable me to enter into closer relation with the Chinese. The Council told me that until autumn I was to give full time to language study. I interpreted this as permitting me to make an itinerating trip with the Rev. Wm. Mortimore. Of that trip two incidents stand out in my memory. One of these took place in a fairly large town. It was market day and the place was crowded with people. From the reception we received it would seem that most of them had never seen a foreigner. We certainly were the centre of curiosity and interest for everyone. Mr. Mortimore and the Chinese workers who were with us decided this was a good opportunity to proclaim our message and sell or distribute some Christian literature. In front of a temple there was a large open space which was enclosed on three sides. A table was secured and the literature was spread out on it. The crowd followed us until the place was completely packed. I won't trust my memory even to guess as to the number. At first they were quiet and listened to the speakers of which of course I was not one. I took as my part to look after the literature. Just what actuated that crowd I do not know but in a short time they began to grow very restless and to press upon us. Standing where I was I could see how those at the far end would begin to push and as a result the whole crowd would sway toward us. As this continued and gradually grew worse we were more and more hemmed in. The table was jostled and the literature scattered around. Perhaps it was my ignorance but I did not feel at all alarmed. Mr. Mortimore (who was far from being a nervous type) and the Chinese who were assisting him saw the situation somewhat differently. They decided that under the circumstances the sensible thing to do was to leave at once. I suppose the fact that behind us was a wall with no opening and we were completely hemmed in by the densely packed crowd led some one to say 'Yes, let's get out if we can.' With all the brashness of a freshman I said 'Just follow me and I'll get you out.' Gathering up some of the literature I stepped down. Though the Chinese were packed in so densely that it seemed impossible to open a way, yet somehow a way did open. A very narrow aisle it was but in a single line we marched out. Even then we were still crowded on every side. Out in the

suburbs they followed us and quite a few, like Zacchaeus, climbed into the branches of trees to watch the strange barbarians depart. I suppose the reason I remember this so well is that it was my first experience with the large crowds that often gathered around us in the market towns.

Another memory of that trip was my first experience of a Chinese priest exorcizing an evil spirit. We spent a day or two in the small walled city of Gin Ien where we had a chapel and quite a number of Christians. One afternoon I went to the loft of the chapel intending to indulge in a sleep. Instead of a sleep came a strange tangle of sounds from a nearby house. There also came the vigorous chanting of some ritual. There was an open window but from where I was, neither the priest nor the musicians were visible. Just how long this kept on I do not remember but it was no short period but I do remember the finale thereof. It sounded as if all the musical instruments were brought into play together while the chanting of the priest came forth with new power. In the midst of this there shot up a brilliant scarlet red flame (the only part of the service which I saw). Then suddenly, the flame died away - the cymbals and the chanting stopped and all was silence. The evil spirit had been driven out. I learned later that it was a haunted house that thus was freed from the menace that had infested it.

It might be appropriate to record here a somewhat similar incident which took place about two years later when travelling with Mr. Quentin who succeeded Mr. Mortimore in Kiating. While we were eating our evening meal in the front part of the inn, we heard a strange jangle of sounds coming from somewhere further back. Our meal over we went back to see just what was going on. In a small room, the door being open, we saw a young woman lying on a bed. To show interest in what was going on was regarded more as a compliment than an intrusion. The young woman looked to me to be in an advanced stage of T.B. But whatever it was, the Chinese attributed it to some evil spirit that had taken possession of her. The priest was there to exorcise this demon. It all sounded very much like what I heard in the exorcizing of the haunted room but there were a few differences. Here tho' we could not see the 'orchestra' we could see the priest. He had several things that he used along with his incantations. The only one I can distinctly recall was a whisk with a very short handle but a large bunch of long hair attached to one end. This ever and anon he vigorously waved through

the air as if to make sure the evil spirit was not taking refuge there. At last the music and the chanting rose to a mighty crescendo ending with a crash and a shout, then all was still. The thing that intrigued me most I did not notice till just near the end. Lying on the floor near the foot of the bed was a figure of a straw man about thirty inches in height. Upon enquiry we were told that the evil spirit had been forced to take possession of this straw man. Upon further questioning we learned that it was to be taken out of the village to some lonely little frequented spot and there discarded. If you have a Bible in your home read Leviticus 16/ 20-22.

Now let us return to Kiating and my life there. By decision of the Council full time for language study ended with the coming of autumn when the school work was assigned to me. This of course brought me into direct touch with the Chinese teachers as well as the pupils. It was a day school in which, in addition to the teaching of Chinese, which naturally was given a somewhat major place, there had been added most of the subjects that I had studied in the public schools of Ontario. In these western subjects the standard was not very high but it was a beginning. At first I limited myself to the teaching of religion and English. Later I added some teaching of arithmetic and familiarized myself with the other subjects so that I could have some idea of the work being done. Oh yes, I also taught singing - don't laugh, it did not go beyond the hymns they used in Sunday School. I enjoyed this work so the year passed quickly and with a modest amount of social life on the whole pleasantly.

With the coming of 1909 I was supposed to be ready for full time work so in addition to the school there was given to me a fairly large country district as my field of labor. In it little or no mission work had been done. One had to begin, as it were at the very bottom. Moreover there was a scarcity in our mission of Chinese evangelists and lay workers. However there was a bright young man in the Kiating Church who was desirous of making a start toward the Christian ministry and he became my associate in this work. Unfortunately he was just as inexperienced as I was in the task that lay before us. However we went forth to do what we could to sow the good seed of the kingdom. On market days it was never difficult to have an audience (sometimes small, sometimes quite large) to whom we would endeavor to bring some phase of our Christian faith. My language limitation put a limitation on how much I could tell them. I never attempted

anything that could be called a sermon. What there was of preaching was mostly the contribution of my Chinese companion. Mine, for the time being was a quieter part. For example when I would enter a tea room very frequently a group of men sitting around a table drinking tea would invite me to join them and they always insisted on paying for my tea. It was here, after remarks about the weather or the price of rice or pork etc., I would get a chance to tell them why I had come to China and in return for the tea give them some free literature. Most of our literature we sold but at a small fraction of its actual cost. We believed it was much more likely to be read if even a small amount was given for it. Until one got accustomed to it, this was a sort of lonely type of work. The real discomfort came from the necessity of using the Chinese inns which, without exception, violated our western standards of cleanliness and where the 'sanitary conveniences' were absolutely awful. What did we accomplish? Well, for one thing, it was good practice for my still faltering Chinese. In one village a small group seemed sufficiently interested that it seemed wise to rent a room or two where we could meet for study and worship. But before this was done I came down with a serious illness and for the time being this work came to an end. Of this illness I will have something to say a little later.

There was one event in this year that I can never forget. To appreciate the significance of this a few words concerning our mission work in West China may be in order. The first missionaries of our church arrived in West China in 1892. Their number was small, I think just three married couples and one single man. The first eight years were hard and difficult, at times actually dangerous. In 1895 the riots in Chengtu became so violent that the missionaries all had to leave, some of them narrowly escaping with their lives. When they returned it was to find all our property destroyed. Again during the Boxer trouble in 1900 they had to leave but this time on returning found our property intact. With the overthrow of the Boxers there came a complete reversal of this attitude toward the missionaries. Instead of opposing, the multitudes came to listen. In many cities and market towns they offered to purchase the necessary property if our mission would open a chapel and start a school. The reasons for this change of attitude has been the subject of much discussion and different conclusions have been reached. Whatever the reasons for it, one thing it did was to give the missionaries a marvellous opportunity to present our gospel message. To this they gave themselves with self-sacrificing, unfaltering zeal

but it was impossible for them to respond to all the requests that came. The danger was that in trying to teach so many most would get only a somewhat superficial understanding of our message. This was probably to some extent true of those who were received into the church. Speaking generally those received had accepted the primary tenets of our Christian faith, had given up the worship of idols and revealed a degree of sincerity by their faithful attendance at church services. At the same time that deeper need of change in one's inner life and conduct had altogether too small a part in their decision to become Christians. This had gradually become more and more evident so that the senior missionaries had come to the conclusion that the most important task that awaited us was the deepening of the spiritual and moral life of the church members. To help toward this end our mission executive decided to have a convention at which, as far as possible, there would be representatives from all our churches. Ren Sheo being central was chosen as the place of meeting. When I received a copy of the program I got an awful shock. I was down to preach the sermon on Sunday morning, the closing day of the convention. To this day I have never been able to understand why I was chosen for this important task. There were many who by their longer experience knew the need within the church as I could not and who could speak in the Chinese tongue with a fluency and ease that I was very very far from having attained. Well, it looked like downright foolishness to choose me. I was greatly troubled as to whether or not I could bring the particular message that was needed and even more could I express myself clearly and effectively in the Chinese tongue. This last point worried me a lot. While I had had no serious illness since coming to China yet my health had not been first class, the result being that language study at times became a burden rather than a task which I could tackle with vigor and enthusiasm. Through the work I was doing I was gradually getting more freedom in speaking but if my memory serves me right I think that up to this time I had never attempted what might be called a normal sermon. The nearest to it was a short talk I gave at a prayer meeting as part of the course in our language study and on which I was marked. Common sense seemed to say "don't you do it". However something within me would not let me decline and, though much troubled at the time, I have always been glad that I made the decision to accept.

The convention opened on a Wednesday evening in July. The weather was hot, wet and muggy. The program was a blending of the educational and the evangelistic. The early Sunday morning prayer service clearly indicated a serious awakening on the part of most so that when later I rose to speak I had a most attentive audience. Was I nervous! It is the one and only time when my legs were actually shaking. My sermon was not a profound one being just the ever insistent demand that those who would truly follow the Christ must definitely break with sin and evil. Over half a century has gone by since that Sabbath morning and yet, in memory, I can look back and, though somewhat dimly, can see the upturned faces of that congregation as, midst a silence that could almost be felt and a tenseness that could not be mistaken, they, as it were, drank in the message I was bringing. Whatever language imperfections there were, there was no doubt but that they knew what that message was. One later evidence came when, years later, listening to one of our Chinese evangelists, it suddenly dawned on me that he was preaching my Ren Sheo sermon. Before he concluded he made the acknowledgment that this was the case. Well, to return to Ren Sheo. Under the circumstances it was deemed wise to change the subject which had previously been decided upon for the afternoon service and a Senior Missionary took charge. It would be nearer the truth to say the congregation took charge. If it were a mission history I am trying to write I would feel it necessary to tell in more detail what took place in the afternoon and evening services. Suffice it to say that there was a response that was absolutely spontaneous, and deeply emotional. No longer did 'saving face', so dominant in Chinese society have control, but with trembling voice and tears they, one by one, sobbed out the sorry story of their sin. It is easy for one not there and ignorant of the conditions and influences under which these people lived to smile in cynical contempt of such proceedings but we missionaries though surprised and astounded, saw it all in a different light. Not indeed that we thought this to be the normal way people should enter the Kingdom of God but that under the circumstances something of this nature was necessary to break the bonds that had held these people in a grip that blocked the way to true Christian living. I have wondered if it were something like this that Jesus meant when He said "The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force". I have already more than once made reference to my somewhat indifferent health. It would be easy to misinterpret this. True a lumbago attack would put me to bed for a few days but these were few and far between. The intestinal attacks were

much more frequent and while somewhat debilitating yet very rarely did they keep me from carrying on my work even if not as vigorously as would otherwise have been the case. As a matter of fact I can now recall only one occasion when I was compelled to keep my bed for a week or more. This happened in the Da O Si temple on Mount Omei. This temple, at that time, was used much by the missionaries for their summer holiday. Wes Morgan and I were keeping house together and continuing our language study. I had a very severe attack and George Sparling and his good wife Dorothy took me in to their limited quarters and nursed me back to health. I still have a deep feeling of gratitude for their kindness. However in the early fall of 1909 I came down with a virulent relapsing fever. My temperature shot up around 105 degrees and stayed there for, as I recall it, three or four days. Then it came down several degrees and we thought the battle was won. But no, soon it would shoot up again. How often this happened I would now hesitate to say but much oftener than I liked. The one bright feature was that most relapses registered a little less fever than the former one. Any one who has had a temperature as high as I had will understand me when I say I felt dreadfully ill and while never giving away to despair could not but wonder if this were not the final call. Here I would like to bear a tribute to one who is not now alive to read this. Miss Lottie Lawson, later Mrs. Walter Small, a nurse of the W.M.S., volunteered her services which was no small comfort to this young man. I do not think Dr. Crawford knew just what to call my illness but between them they gradually won the battle against whatever virus or germ etc., that had laid hold on me.

When I was sufficiently recovered I was strongly urged to go to Chengtu for a change. This I did and spent about two weeks as a guest of Rev. and Mrs. James Endicott who were very gracious hosts, Returning to Kiating I took up again the work that I had been doing before the illness laid me low. Early in 1910 I again went to Chengtu this time to attend the annual meeting of our mission council. But again I was unfortunate. This time I came down with an unusually bad cold with considerable fever and while council was being held I was in bed under the doctor's care. All this raised the question whether, for reasons of health, I should remain in China or return to Canada. A committee of doctors was appointed to wait on me and bring in a recommendation. They came, stood around my bedside, examined me, and asked a lot of questions. Then

in my presence began to talk the matter over. Of course I was deeply interested. Did I want to be sent back to the work in Canada which a few years previous I had been so leath to leave. No, I did not. Not that the home task in Canada did not to some extent still appeal to me but something of the magnitude of the task that was ours in China had laid hold on me and I wanted to stay with it. I don't think I gave expression to my preference but with both ears and heart I listened to what they were saying. It looked at first as if Canada was going to win, when one of them - Dr. Barker - said 'I think we ought to give him another year before making any such decision'. The rest agreed and I am glad to say that while my health was not perfect, yet neveragain was it deemed necessary to raise the question as to my physical fitness for the work in China.

This Council did something which greatly surprised me. I was moved from Kiating to Chengtu. I do not think that this move had an relation to my health but was made in order to meet an emergency which arose through one or more missionaries going on furlough. To me it meant returning to Kiating to conclude certain matters in connection with my work there, pack my goods, say goodbye to my Kiating friends, both Chinese and missionaries, and make my way back to Chengtu. And by the way Chengtu and Kiating were four days apart travelling by chair. Travelling by boat the time varied. Going up river no time was saved but going down river it took one or two days less depending on the time of the year. My work in Chengtu included the church, the junior and senior primary school, and one out station. The church was the first one started by our mission. The older pupils of the school I have just mentioned and also from the W.M. School, most of the employees of our press and a certain number connected with the hospital, guaranteed a good-sized congregation and in some respects a very important one. The weakness of the situation was that the members who had no connection with our mission institution were comparatively few. Everything considered it presented a real opportunity of service. I was fortunate in having one of the abtest of our evangelists associated with me in this work. However, as I was officially the Pastor (as yet we had no ordained Chinese), I felt I should do my part in preaching. I remember I preached on the first two Sundays but having thus, as it were, introduced myself, I saw to it that the evangelist had his regular turn. In fact I rather think he preached oftener than I did. But I did preach fairly regularly and the getting up of a sermon in Chinese still took a lot of time.

The school was much larger and more advanced than the one in Kiating. We had both day and boarding pupils. I left most of the running of the school to the Chinese principal. We regularly consulted together in a general way but except when some particular problem or difficulty arose I in no way interfered and even then tried to do it in a way that would in no way undermine his authority or prestige. In fact in that first year I had the minimum of difficulty in the school. I taught pretty much the same subjects as I did in Kiating and did what I could to see that the quality of teaching being done was reasonably satisfactory.

My outstation was Tsong Nye Chiao and was only about nine miles from the city. With my pony I could leave in early morning, spend six or seven hours there and be back by dark. This was an average sized market village where we had a chapel and a junior Primary School. As in my next two terms I had quite considerable outstation work I will postpone any account of this type of work until later in these memoirs.

There is not much of particular interest to relate in connection with my work in the city church. It was only partly organized but there were a few members to whom I could always turn for advice. I do happen to remember the first matter that one of the members brought to me for some solution. He belonged to some union, I think in connection with the work he was doing. Like the unions here there was a fee each member had to pay. Part of this money was used in some idol worship and he said that now he was a Christian he did not want any of his money used in that way. To tell the truth I cannot remember just how I met the problem. For one thing - not knowing the man - I was not sure how sensitive he was about this idol worship in which a small part of his money was used, or whether he just wanted to save a little money. I know I consulted with my Chinese teacher who knew much more about Chinese customs than I did. Well, whatever I told him he seemed to go away at least partly satisfied.

The other matter I remember was more serious. A rumor got started that the Chinese evangelist was sadly misbehaving. I had faith in the man and at first I refused to take it seriously but as the rumor persisted and grew I decided something had to be done. I took it upon myself to form a committee consisting of two or three of the best members of the church and one or two

missionaries. The Chinese took the main part in the investigation and brought in a report that according to Chinese custom the evangelist had been quite indiscreet, but that there was no truth whatever in the more serious part of the rumor. This report was made public at one of our week night gatherings. The evangelist acknowledged the truth of the report and gave assurance that he would not fail in this way again. As far as I could tell he was fully restored in the minds of the church folk to the good standing in which he had previously been held.

On the whole the year passed quickly and pleasantly. My old complaints bothered me some but I had no serious illness and was able to carry on with a fair amount of vigor. Of missionaries and other foreigners there was a goodly number in Chengtu. There was all the social life one had time for. Tennis was popular and I played it quite a lot. Having filled the allotted time for the first term bachelors I left for home in the spring of 1911. Ed Wallace accompanied me to Shanghai. There we separated, he to go home via Europe and I to hasten home for my parents' golden wedding anniversary.