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七 給你錢不是叫你喝酒是叫你喝茶

八 非是念經就是吃齋

九 北山上有好些樵夫打柴

十 弟撕破的書總得用糨糊粘

十一 弟打兄是因爲要分家產

十二 替你還這筆錢你更該我的賬

十三 弟兒費許多的工夫爲甚麼刨坑

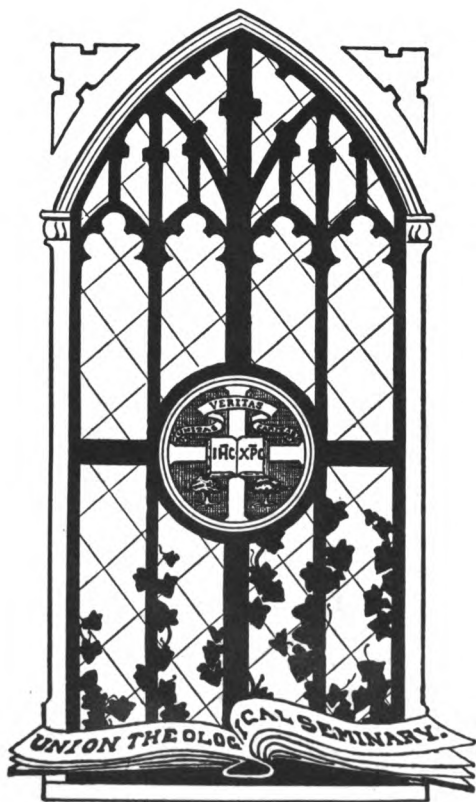
十四 弟兒北邊住的就是你哥哥

十五 弟離似乎遠些來到我家也不犯

Work for the blind in China

Constance Frederica Gordon Cumming







WORK FOR THE BLIND IN CHINA :

PARTS I. & II.

(the latter written five years after the former).

BY

C. F. GORDON-CUMMING,

AUTHOR OF "WANDERINGS IN CHINA," "AT HOME IN FIJI,"

"TWO HAPPY YEARS IN CEYLON."

~~~~~  
"The people that sat in Darkness have seen a Great Light."  
~~~~~

GILBERT & RIVINGTON, LD.,

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[Translation into all languages is invited]

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MISSION TO THE 500,000 BLIND OF CHINA.

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“I will bring the Blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make Darkness LIGHT before them, and crooked things straight.”—ISAIAH xlii. 16.

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NEVER in all the ages that have elapsed since these words of promise were spoken, have they been more literally and strikingly fulfilled than in this latter half of the nineteenth century, in that very remarkable work, by which the Rev. W. H. Murray hopes not only to bring Light and Life to the great multitude of Blind in China, but also to transform a considerable number of his students into active Missionary Agents, as Scripture Readers, and Singers of Sacred Song, such as invariably attract an attentive audience in China, as in most other countries.

Mr. Murray's work has only just come to the surface sufficiently to claim public recognition. Hitherto the little acorn which he has planted has been quietly germinating in the heart of the Chinese capital, known only to a handful of poor blind men, and scarcely recognized even by the little group of foreign residents in that great city; and though there is every prospect that it will assuredly develop into a wide-spreading tree of

healing and of knowledge, destined to overshadow the whole land with its beneficent influence, it is as yet but a feeble sapling, whose growth, humanly speaking, depends on the fostering care of the Christian public.

Only those who have attempted to master the excruciating difficulties of any of the numerous dialects of Chinese, or the terrible array of intricate written characters which the weary eye must transfer to memory ere it is possible to read the simplest book, can fully appreciate the boon which has been conferred on the legion of the blind in China, by means of the patient ingenuity of a Scotch working-man.

The calling to Mission-work of the benefactor who has been enabled in so wonderful a sense to open the eyes of the blind, reminds me of one of the Bible stories, of how often, when GOD selected men for special work, HE summoned them from the plough, from the care of their flocks, from their fishing, mending their nets, or tent-making. And ONE WHO WAS LORD of all, consecrated all honest work, by choosing to receive HIS early human training in the carpenter's shop.

William Murray (who was born at Port Dundas, near Glasgow—the only son in a family of ten children) would, in the natural course of events, have adopted the profession of a saw-miller, but for an accident by which, when about nine years of age, while too fearlessly examining the machinery, he lost his left arm, and was thus disabled—an apparent calamity which was the first link in that chain of events leading up to a discovery

which, if properly developed, may prove an incalculable boon to millions yet unborn in the Celestial Empire.

So rude a check to his love of machinery doubtless led to greater diligence in his school studies, and so soon as the lad was able to work for his living, he obtained employment as a rural letter-carrier in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. In this, however, the subject of Sunday work proved a serious difficulty, which he solved by giving up two shillings a week of his scanty wages in order to be freed from an obligation against which his conscience revolted. His sacrifice, however, bore good fruit, for the earnest remonstrances of this young postman proved the commencement of that wide-spread movement which has secured so large a measure of Sabbatical rest for his comrades in the service of the Post Office.

His own longing was to obtain employment in some form of Mission Work, and again and again he applied to the National Bible Society of Scotland. But though greatly attracted by the lad, the Secretary feared that one apparently so very simple and unassuming, would fail to prove a successful Colporteur, and, having given up the secure services of the Post Office, might be thrown, literally single-handed, on the world.

But, as the same Secretary now says, "What could he do against a man who was praying himself into the service of the Society?" For (though he knew nothing of this at that time) the young postman confided to him later, how he divided his long daily walk into three parts, and as he tramped along the

monotonous road he beguiled a third of the distance by the study of the Holy Scriptures in the original Hebrew; the second beat was devoted to the Greek Testament; while the last section was reserved for daily prayer that GOD would vouchsafe to employ him in direct missionary work, and that from carrying Queen Victoria's Royal Mail, he might be promoted to become one of the Messengers of the GREAT KING in carrying HIS glad tidings to some far-distant heathen land.

At last, when in 1864 he renewed his application to the National Bible Society, his services were accepted, and he was commissioned to commence work among the ships congregated on the Clyde, and very soon the Society discovered that "it had never had such a Colporteur" as the gentle being who made his way among the sailors of all nations, readily acquiring such scraps of divers tongues as enabled him to effect more sales of the Holy Scriptures in foreign languages than had been accomplished by any of his predecessors. And yet (like another who, more than three thousand years ago, was called from the care of his father-in-law's flock to accomplish a great work) in his own mother tongue he is "not eloquent, but slow of speech."

This work amongst sailors was reserved for the winter months. In summer he was sent round wild districts in the Scotch Highlands, pushing his Bible-cart along many a lonely track of bleak moorland,—a task which, on hilly roads, must often have needed all the strength of this willing but only one-

armed colporteur, who all the time was longing to be employed in carrying the Word of Life to those to whom it was yet unknown.

I wonder whether in those years of probation, he often found encouragement in the thought of how only a hundred years ago, William Marsham, bookseller's apprentice, sat down wearily in Westminster Abbey, grieving at the prospect of spending his life in carrying heavy book parcels, while Carey, the Baptist cobbler, was being snubbed by the assembled ministers for presuming to suggest the duty of commencing Foreign Missions! Yet notwithstanding all the drawbacks of general inertia, and the fewness of the workers, look at the results to-day of the work begun jointly by the bookseller's apprentice and the poor cobbler!

Perhaps Murray remembered how seventy years ago Morrison began Mission work in China, alone and despised, having to wait fourteen years ere he baptized his first convert. To-day, 100,000 in that great empire own allegiance to his MASTER, and of these about 20,000 are habitual communicants in connection with one or other of the Protestant Missions.

Doubtless, too, Murray's thoughts sometimes pictured the solitary Wesleyan missionary who fifty years ago landed on one of the cannibal Fijian Isles, in imminent peril of his life. To-day, not alone in the 200 isles of that fair Archipelago, but throughout the beautiful groups which stud the South Pacific, not a trace of old heathenism remains. Or his thoughts may

have travelled to Livingstone, the Glasgow cotton-piecer, and to scores of other humble human agents, and from one and all he would gather the same lesson of earnest care in doing the very best for the work now committed to each one of us—no matter how trivial it may seem, assured that it must be the best preparation for whatever else we may be destined to accomplish.

Ere long, Murray's remarkable aptitude for languages attracted the notice of some of the Directors of his Society. He was accordingly permitted to attend classes at the Old College in the High Street (a friend helping him to pay his fees), provided his studies nowise interfered with his regular work. All day long, therefore, through the gloomy Glasgow winters he stood in the streets beside his Bible waggon, hurrying back to his lodgings for a hasty supper; then studying till 9 o'clock, and rising daily at 3 a.m. on the chill wintry mornings in order to prepare for his classes at College from 8 till 10 a.m., at which hour he began a new day's work of street bookselling.

At length his seven years' apprenticeship as a home colporteur were fulfilled, and in 1871 he obtained his heart's desire, and sailed for China, where it was arranged that he should remain six months at Chefoo, engaged in the bewildering task of learning to recognize at sight the 4000 intricate characters by which the Chinese language is represented on paper.

The same aptitude for mastering crabbed symbols which

had facilitated his study of Greek and Hebrew, enabled this diligent student to acquire about 2000 Chinese characters in four months, when he started on his first pioneer journey to visit a city about 250 miles in the interior of the Province of Shang-tu. He invented a rude litter slung between four mules, as the most convenient method of carrying his books, and thus made his way safely along precipitous mountain roads, facing bitter cold, and many difficulties, but sustained through all discouragements by occasional gleams of great promise.

But it is not my purpose to enlarge on Mr. Murray's many and varied experiences during sixteen years of incessant work as a colporteur in various provinces of China, as also on his more adventurous expeditions into Manchuria and Mongolia, though these are full of stirring human interest, by no means lacking in quaint incident. Imagine travelling all day by difficult paths, crossing dangerous rivers, and facing all manner of perils, to find oneself at night glad to seek shelter in a wretched so-called inn, which proves to be little better than a miserable shed, wherein mules and men seek shelter together from the pitiless storm, where the scanty food is of the coarsest and most repellant to the foreign palate, and where the traveller, blinded by the dense smoke which pervades the house, is guided to the only "reserved" sleeping berth—the post of honour—which proves to be the coffin which the host is carefully cherishing for his own eventual use—the filial and most acceptable gift of his dutiful sons!

As regards work, Mr. Murray has sometimes had to face the discouragement and danger of waiting till riotous and antagonistic mobs grew weary of their own discourtesy to the gentle foreign teacher.

On one occasion, after he had thus patiently endured weeks of annoyance without effecting a single sale, the fickle folk suddenly veered round, and clamoured for the foreign "Classic of Jesus;" so that he could scarcely produce copies fast enough, and when evening came, he found he had sold 3000 books! After this the people in that city became so friendly that they would not hear of his leaving them, so he remained there for six months; his knowledge of machinery and of shipping details proving an unfailing source of interest to the crowds who thronged him; and it is almost needless to add that the influence thus acquired was invariably used as a means to edge in the subject which ever filled his heart.

Since his arrival in China he has sold upwards of 100,000 copies and portions of the Holy Scriptures in the Chinese and Tartar languages. Many of these have been purchased at great fairs by merchants and influential men from remote districts, and some copies have even found access within the sacred precincts of the jealously guarded Imperial Palace. Truly, were this the sole result of Mr. Murray's accident, it would have proved no trifling gain to his fellow-men.

But interesting as are all efforts for imparting spiritual light to those into whose hearts it has not yet shined, the work

which is so emphatically Mr. Murray's own peculiar Gift, is that of enlightening those who are also physically blind. One of the first things which deeply impressed him (as it must impress every traveller who looks around him in the densely crowded streets of Chinese cities) was the extraordinary number of blind men who mingle in every crowd, some going about alone, or guided by a child; others in gangs of eight or ten, each guided by the man in front of him, while the leader feels his way with a long stick—a most literal illustration of the blind leading the blind. A gentleman assured me that he had on one occasion seen no less than 600 miserable blind beggars all assembled to share a gratuitous distribution of rice!

This very large proportion of blindness is due to several causes, such as leprosy, small-pox, neglected ophthalmia, and general dirt, to which, in great tracts of North China, we must add the stifling dust and smoke caused by the lack of ordinary fuel, which leads the people, all through the long, parching summer, to cut every blade of sun-dried grass, and turf sods, to heat their ovens. This produces a dense smoke, which penetrates to every corner of the houses, causing the eyes to smart most painfully.

Now when you consider the size of the vast Chinese Empire as compared with our little England (which is barely the size of the smallest of the Eighteen Provinces, and not a third of the size of the larger ones), and recollect that in our favoured land, where the ravages of small-pox and ophthalmia are so

effectually kept in check, there are nearly 40,000 blind persons, to say nothing of the multitudes whose sight is seriously defective, and when you come to think that, although there is only provision for about 3000 in asylums, yet it is very exceptional to see even one blind person in England, you can readily understand that when we roughly estimate the blind of China at 500,000 (that is to say, an average of one in 600, supposing the population not to exceed 300,000,000), we are probably very far below the mark.

Many of these blind men and women are simply most miserable beggars, hungry and almost naked, lying on the dusty highway and clamouring for alms, or else yelling frightful songs in most discordant chorus, to an accompaniment of clanging cymbals, beating small gongs or clacking wooden clappers, producing such a din that the deafened bystanders gladly pay the infinitesimal coin which induces them to move on. A considerable number earn their living as fortune-tellers, and play dismally on flutes to attract attention. These men carry a board with movable pieces something like draughts, each marked by a symbol, by means of which they pretend to foretell lucky days, and answer all manner of questions. Thus for unnumbered centuries have the blind legions of China dragged through their darkened, dreary lives, a burden to themselves and to all around them.

And yet blindness seems to be the only form of human suffering for which the average Chinaman feels a certain

moderate degree of pity. Few are so utterly debased as to rob a sightless man, and such are generally addressed by a title of respect, as Hsien-Shêng, i.e. Teacher, although the adult blind are, as a class, about the most disreputable members of the community—so bad that even a hopeful soul like their friend Mr. Murray is compelled to admit that the majority appear incorrigible; and, indeed, the night-refuge where they chiefly congregate in Peking bears so vile a character, that Mr. Murray himself has never ventured to cross its threshold.

All his hopes, therefore, rest on training young lads, and so far as possible isolating them from their seniors; for those he fears that comparatively little can be done, but by taking boys in hand as early as possible—some as young as seven years of age—he has good hope that (as spotless paper may be evolved from foulest rags) so from this, the worst class of the people, he may rescue many, who, under careful training, may not only attain undreamt-of gladness for themselves, but may also be made the means of incalculable good to their fellow-countrymen—truly a bright star of hope now rising on their gloomy horizon.

Of course, in this sweeping classification of the adult blind, there is room for many bright exceptions, and, indeed, the first thing which attracted Mr. Murray's attention to the present work was the fact that amongst the crowds who (with true Chinese reverence for all written characters) pressed forward to purchase the copies or portions of Holy Scripture which he offered for sale at a very cheap rate, many blind men came,

likewise desiring to purchase the "Christian classics;" and when he asked why they wanted a book which they could not see to read, they replied that they would keep it, and that perhaps friends who could read would sometimes let them hear it. Then he would tell them how, in Europe, the blind are taught to read and even to write; but this they never could believe, for he seemed to them as one that mocked, so utterly incredible did it appear that any one should learn to read with his fingers.

But the more he saw, the more grievous did it appear that absolutely nothing was done for those darkened lives by any Christian Agency known in Peking, and he began to plead their cause amongst the missionaries of various nations, whom he could reach. These, however, very naturally replied, "We Christian missionaries of all Protestant denominations put together, are in the proportion of one to one million of the population. How can we undertake any additional work? Perhaps in the next generation, if there are ten times as many missionaries, and ten times the funds now available, something may be done for the Blind of China."

Still, as he went about his daily task, mingling with ever-changing crowds, in scorching summer and freezing winter, this thought was never absent from his mind. Failing to awaken human sympathy, his soul was the more ceaselessly absorbed in prayer that some means might be revealed to him whereby he might help these poor neglected sufferers.

Ere leaving Scotland he had mastered Professor Melville Bell's system of Visible Speech for the instruction of the deaf (which he found so greatly facilitated his own study of the very difficult language, that he has prepared a pamphlet on the subject, for the use of all foreign students). It occurred to him that this might be adapted to the use of the blind, his first idea being to reduce all Chinese sounds to symbolic forms. He went so far as to have these made in clay and baked, so that they could be handled. From these, some blind pupils have learnt to read; amongst others who have been thus taught is a deaf mute. But this system was cumbersome and unsatisfactory—all the more so, as it occurred to the teacher that as the Chinese adore their own written hieroglyphic characters, they would probably render divine honour to these clay symbols!

Moreover, during his residence in Glasgow, his interest had been so deeply aroused by seeing blind persons coming to purchase books prepared for their use, that he had set himself to master both Moon's system of embossed alphabetic symbols, and also Braille's system of embossed dots. Now he ceaselessly revolved in his own mind whether it might be possible to adapt one or other of these to the bewildering intricacies of the Chinese language, with all its perplexing "Tones," which by an almost inappreciable difference of pronunciation, cause one word to convey a dozen different meanings. Of the difficulty of the task proposed, some idea may be formed from the fact

that in order to read such a book as the Bible, in Chinese ordinary type, the student, instead of mastering twenty-four letters of the alphabet, must learn to recognize at sight no less than four thousand distinct and crabbed characters—a task which generally requires about six years of study! Even to read the Chinese equivalent of Jack the Giant-Killer involves a perfect knowledge of 1200 characters!

Such was the perplexing problem with which this would-be benefactor of the blind wrestled apparently without result, till one day, he tells us, that wearied with a long morning's work, he had lain down to rest awhile during the noon-day heat, and with closed eyes lay as if asleep, when suddenly, as clearly as he now sees one of his stereotyped books, he saw outspread before him the whole system which he has since then so patiently and ingeniously worked out, and, moreover, at once perceived with thankful joy, that by this system Chinese sounds could be rendered so accurately, that whereas to a sighted person learning to read or write Chinese by the ordinary method, it is the most bewildering of all languages, it would by this means become one of the easiest to acquire.

In this Vision (or Revelation as he believes it to have been—an opinion which I think few Christians will gainsay) he perceived that as the Chinese know nothing of alphabetic symbols, he must discard all attempts to produce any alphabetic system, but must make use of numerals, by which to represent the 408 distinct syllables which he found to be sufficient to suggest all

the sounds of the language, in place of the 4000 characters used in ordinary Chinese type. To represent these numerals, he decided that instead of using figures, he must substitute mnemonic letters, e.g. T or D for 1, N to represent 2, M for 3, R for 4, L for 5, Sh for 6, K for 7, F or V for 8, P or B for 9, S for 0. Furthermore he contrived that every Chinese word, no matter what its length, should be represented by only three symbols—units, tens, and hundreds, and for these he has arranged embossed dots grouped on Braille's system, which he adopted in preference to Moon's alphabetic system, the latter not being adapted for writing, or to represent music, which is one of the most marked features in Mr. Murray's system of training.

If all this sounds utterly incomprehensible to the reader, I can only try to console him by remarking that it is equally so to myself ; but daily experience now proves it to be so extraordinarily simple to the Chinese intelligence, that any blind man or lad of average intelligence, can thoroughly acquire the arts of both reading and writing within two months, and a sharp lad can do this in six weeks.

It must not be inferred that Mr. Murray's Vision at once brought him "to the desired haven" in regard to its practical application. But the Inspiration thus received was as a chart by which he was enabled carefully to work his way through a thousand perplexities—a labour of love to which he devoted every hour that he could steal from sleep or rest, through eight

long years. For deeming himself bound to devote every moment of the day to direct work for the Bible Society, it was only after "business hours" that he allowed himself to work out the details of this, his special interest.

At last he so far arranged his system that he determined to try whether it could be acquired by a poor old blind man, "Mr. Wang," who was crippled with rheumatism, and like to die of want. He provided the old man with such creature comforts as ensured a quiet mind, and then with the aid of a native colporteur commenced teaching him, and soon, to the unspeakable joy of both pupil and teacher, the poor rheumatic fingers learned to discriminate the dots, and the blind man was able to read the Holy Word for himself.

Just then a blind man, upwards of forty years of age, was brought to the medical missionary, having been severely kicked by a mule which he had inadvertently approached, his long guiding stick passing between its legs. This man was induced to beguile the hours of suffering by the study of the new system. He proved an apt pupil, and within two months could read well, though his finger-tips were roughened by age and work.

The next pupil was a poor lad who had become blind, and who having no one to provide for him, had literally been thrown on to a dung-heap and there left to die. He was found by a man who had known his father, and said he was a good man, and that it was a pity to leave the lad to perish; so having heard of the foreign bookseller's extraordinary care for

the blind, he actually resolved to risk the expense of hiring a cart, and brought the poor starving boy to Mr. Murray's lodgings, begging him to try and save him. Three months of careful nursing, with good food and needful drugs, restored him to health, and he soon was overjoyed by finding himself able to acquire the honoured arts of reading and writing.

Mr. Murray next selected a poor little orphan blind beggar, whom he often observed lying almost naked in the streets in the bitter cold of winter, but who, notwithstanding his loneliness and poverty, always seemed cheerful and content, and who, moreover, had the special recommendation of being free from all taint of leprosy. He took this lad in hand, washed and clothed him, and undertook to feed and lodge him, provided he would apply himself in earnest to mastering this new learning. Naturally, the boy was delighted, and we can imagine his ecstasy, and the thankful gladness of his teacher, when *within six weeks* he was able, not only to read fluently, but to write with remarkable accuracy—better, indeed, than many sighted Chinamen can do after studying the ordinary method for upwards of twenty years! This simpler writing is also far more rapid—a good pupil being able to write on an average twenty-two words per minute.

It was at this stage that, in the course of my aimless wanderings, I chanced to visit Peking, and there made acquaintance with Mr. Murray and these first-fruits of his teaching (truly salvage from the slums of Peking); and it struck me as intensely

pathetic, as we stood at the door of a dark room—for it was night, but that made no difference to these blind readers—to hear what I knew to be words of Holy Scripture, read by men who, less than four months previously, sat begging in the streets in misery and rags, on the verge of starvation, now full of delight in their newly acquired power.

During the eight years which have elapsed since then, Mr. Murray has continued to work on, almost unknown, elaborating the details of his system, and training as many pupils as he could feed and teach. But the work has hitherto been crippled for lack of time and of funds, its development having been limited to what could be accomplished by the continual self-denial of the Working-man to whom it owes its existence. Not only, as I have already said, was he bound to devote all his hours of recognized work to bookselling and street-preaching, but he has also all along taxed his slender salary to the very utmost, in order to provide board, lodging, and raiment for his indigent blind students. (For even a frugal Chinaman cannot be respectably clothed and fed for less than £10 a year.) And yet when one poor helpless lad after another seemed thrown upon his hands, he felt that it was impossible to reject those so manifestly entrusted to his care, and so the modest income supposed to suffice for one man, has been made to feed and clothe a dozen.

Very touching is the story of most of these poor waifs. For instance, having resolved to adopt a blind lad who came to

his door begging, Mr. Murray visited the wretched parents in their miserable home, where the father lay suffering tortures from rheumatic fever, and the only other child was also blind. Soon afterwards the father died, and the mother brought her second boy to commit him to the care of this good friend. But in giving her two sons the parting kiss, the poor bereaved creature sank to the ground in an agony of tears and lay prostrate, weeping bitterly for two hours; her grief appealing so intensely to the sympathy of the other blind lads and men, that all united in a chorus of sobs and tears. So deeply were the neighbours touched, that notwithstanding their own deep poverty, they raised a small subscription, to help her on her journey to a distant friend; the blind lads adding the few cash which they had received as presents.

One of the most satisfactory pupils in the school is one of two brothers, aged twelve and fourteen, who came to Mr. Murray's door on their first begging tour, having already travelled 150 miles from their native town, where both parents had died of fever. The elder brother, whose sight was good, said he could work, and earn enough to keep himself, but could not provide for two without having recourse to begging, from which he shrank; so he entreated Mr. Murray to take charge of his brother, promising to return ere long, to ascertain whether he was found capable of learning. But, evidently fearing lest the blind lad should be returned to his care, the elder brother did not return for two years, by which time the bright little fellow

had proved himself an eminently satisfactory scholar, the best hand at stereotyping, and most reliable in all departments of work ; having moreover, so marked a talent for music, that he has since then become organist in the Chapel of the London Mission. When the elder brother returned, Mr. Murray took him into the school, and without speaking a word placed his hand in that of the younger, who instantly recognized the touch ; the two stood speechless for a moment, then tears began to flow, and he retired, leaving the two together to talk over their varied experiences.

It must not, however, be supposed that all the pupils turn out as satisfactory as these. Sad to say, the very first boy taught, whose prospects seemed so hopeful, was tempted, just for one day, to rejoin his former associates that he might display his various attainments. He was decoyed away by a wandering blind minstrel, and though, after a while, he returned to his benefactor expressing much contrition, and was once more received into the school, he was found to have suffered such complete moral shipwreck, that for the sake of the others, his expulsion became necessary—a very bitter sorrow to the patient friend who had so rejoiced over his early promise.

Of course, tidings of the wonderful gift thus conferred on a chosen few, have brought others who, being able to maintain themselves, have come as self-supporting pupils. Thus one blind man arrived who had travelled 300 miles to put himself under Mr. Murray's tuition. Another came who was found to

be endowed with talents which seemed so specially to fit him for the ministry, that he has been transferred to an institution at Tien-Tsin where candidates are prepared for Holy Orders. Another very encouraging pupil is a young man who lost his sight when he was about twenty. He rapidly acquired the blind system of reading and writing, and then set to work to stereotype an embossed Gospel of St. Matthew in classical Mandarin Chinese, which is the *lingua franca* understood by all educated men throughout the Empire.

But the colloquial language of the illiterate people varies in every Province, and the dialects spoken between Canton and Peking are so different as to necessitate the publication of, at least, eight different translations of the Bible, for the use of sighted persons. Hence it is evident that all these must be reduced to the dot system ere the blind beggars of the Central and Southern Provinces can share the privilege already open to those of North China, so far as to possess in stereotype five books of the Bible and some small books on sacred subjects; also a considerable number of music books.

The Peking School also possesses many other books in manuscript, and both these, and those stereotyped for the use of all fellow-sufferers, will rapidly increase; for Mr. Murray has taught his pupils to do everything for themselves in the preparation of their books, even to the stereotyping, which by a very ingenious mechanical contrivance of his own invention,

they are able to do so rapidly, and with such accuracy, that any one of these lads can with ease prepare considerably more work than three men in England will turn out in the same time, and will also do it more accurately, and at a far cheaper rate ; and, of course, as long as such lads are students, they gratefully work for their keep. A London workman endowed with sight considers three pages of stereotyping to be a good day's work. A Chinese blind lad will easily produce ten pages a day.*

I think we could not have a better illustration of the wonderful laws of compensation, than this proof of the additional sensitiveness imparted to the finger-tips of the blind. Certainly amongst sighted persons, few of the most delicate hands possess so keen a sense of touch as to be able with closed eyes to follow even a line in primers prepared for English blind readers.

Another compensating circumstance is that the blind seem almost invariably to be endowed with a marked faculty for music, and though, when left to themselves, they naturally indulge in the horrible caterwauling which passes for music in the Celestial Empire, they very easily acquire European tunes, and not only pick up a new air very rapidly, but remember it accurately—a very important qualification for all engaged in pioneer Mission-work, in which the value of singing,

* See in Appendix, Mr. Murray's own description of the method he has devised to facilitate this part of the work.

as the handmaid of preaching, is being more and more fully recognized in all parts of the world.*

Now here is another marked advantage of Mr. Murray's ingenious adaptation of Braille's system. So marvellously does it lend itself to the representation of sound, that he has found no difficulty in thereby expressing all musical notes, and terms in the study of harmony, which indeed had already been done in Europe, where a considerable musical literature therein has been prepared for the blind of various nations.

The students in the humble school at Peking now write out musical scores from dictation with wonderful accuracy; their writing-frames and paper being adjusted, all wait with style in hand, ready to begin, and in about fifteen minutes they produce a perfect score, perhaps one of Sankey's hymns with all its parts. Then, with great pleasure to themselves they pick out the tunes on the piano, harmonium, or organ,—beginners being taught by having the embossed symbol pasted on to each note; so then each student reads the

* So fully is this the case in regard to America's Foreign Missions, that the New England Conservatory of Music at Boston now invites all who are studying for Mission-work to accept its teaching *free of charge*, that they may not only have the opportunity of studying Church and chorus music, and sight-singing, and may be instructed in piano and reed-organ tuning, but may also acquire such a knowledge of the fundamental principles of harmony, as may enable them to arrange native music, and write the accompanying parts:—in short, that they may be taught *how to teach others* both vocally and instrumentally. This musical training is now offered, because experience has proved that *much of the deadness and apathy in many Missions has been due to its neglect*, whereas the most successful Missions have invariably been those in which singing was largely employed.

written score with one hand, while with the other he finds out the notes.

Having thus mastered the tunes, the blind organist and choir sing their Christian lyrics in the chapel, which is open to all comers; and when a good congregation has assembled, attracted by the music, one of the students, who is a very gifted scholar, addresses the people, and at the close of his exhortation, recommends them to purchase a copy of the Holy Book, that they may study it for themselves; and at the close of the day the sales by the blind lad are often found to have been larger than those of the Bible Society's authorized agent. Indeed, it is said to be largely owing to his preaching and singing that it has been found necessary to pull down the old chapel and build a much larger one.

No wonder that to their countrymen it should appear little short of miraculous that blind beggars should be thus cared for by foreigners, and endowed with apparently supernatural powers—indeed, had it not been that Mr. Murray had so thoroughly won the confidence of the people by his constant intercourse with them while Bible-selling in the streets, they would assuredly have attributed the whole work to magic, and thus irreparable harm would have been done. As it was, many even of the adult Christians found it so incomprehensible that, for awhile, they deemed this reading with finger-tips to be accomplished by clever jugglery—a sort of sleight of hand.

For this reason, Mr. Murray does not consider that it would

be expedient for him altogether to give up the bookselling and street-preaching by which he keeps on such friendly terms with the ever-changing crowds ; but it certainly is very desirable that this uniquely gifted man should henceforth be enabled to devote half his time exclusively to the development of the work, which assuredly has been so specially committed to him. Hitherto, as we have seen, this patient toiler has only deemed himself entitled to work for the blind in hours stolen from the night, often after long days of hard travel, exposed to scorching summer sun, or freezing wintry blasts.

SURELY SUCH A STORY AS THIS MAY WELL INCITE MANY TO PROVE THEIR INTEREST BY SOME ACT OF SELF-DENIAL, WHICH MAY ENABLE THEM TO HELP SO EARNEST A WORKER. (For we all know how very apt we are to limit our giving-power to such a sum as we can spare without involving much self-denial !)

Would that some who read these lines would consider for a moment what life would be to themselves were they deprived of gifts so precious as SIGHT and LIGHT, and would each resolve to present for this branch of GOD'S work such a sum as he shall really miss—not taken from the total of his accustomed offerings, but as a Special Thank-offering for these precious gifts—a portion of that money-talent which we know we only hold in trust, as we so often need to remind ourselves when we say, " Both riches and honour come of THEE, and of THINE own do we give THEE."

The unprecedented depression now affecting all classes in Great Britain has also told grievously on the income of a multitude of charitable institutions, so that in their chorus of pathetic appeals, this low cry from China has called forth an utterly inadequate response. Little over £2000 have as yet been received, where ten times that sum could be so profitably laid out ; for assuredly no Mission-field is more certain ere long to yield fruit an hundred-fold than this Chinese Empire ; and I know of no Agency which is more surely destined to work among the masses, as an ever-spreading leaven of all good, than this training of Blind Scripture Readers, who year by year may be sent forth from this school to read the Sacred Message in the streets of Peking and other great centres of heathenism, holding forth to others the LIGHT which has gladdened their own lives.

From the singular reverence of the Chinese for all written characters, and for those who can read them, it is evident that a blind reader there occupies a very different position from that of the men whom we are accustomed to see in our own streets. Furthermore, in no other country have so many converts attributed the conviction which has induced them to face all the persecution that almost invariably follows the renunciation of idolatry, solely to their solitary study of some copy of the Scriptures which has casually fallen into their hands. Hence it is obvious, that as assistant colporteurs, blind Scripture Readers may prove most valuable agents in spreading the knowledge of Christian Truth.

This New Mission will certainly appeal, as no other has yet done, to two of the strongest characteristics of China's millions, namely, *their reverence for pure benevolence, and their veneration for the power of reading.* To see foreigners undertaking such a work of love for the destitute blind, will go far towards dispelling prejudice against Christians and their MASTER, and will prepare the way for the workers of all Christian Missions.

It is hoped that all the principal Christian Missions may send agents—either Europeans, or carefully selected Chinese converts—to be trained by Mr. Murray, that they may carry his system to every existing Mission Station. One such SIGHTED Head-Teacher in each district could there found a Blind School, and train Chinese Scripture Readers, and thus the work may be ceaselessly extended in every direction, till it overspreads the whole vast Empire like a network.

Probably the very strongest point in favour of this Mission, is its bearing on the admission of Christian influence into the dreary homes wherein about **150,000,000** CHINESE WOMEN, of all ages, live their monotonous lives in strict seclusion. Some of these patriarchal households number from 60 to 100 women, ranging from great-grandmothers down to their female slaves, and including the wives, widows, and other relations of father, sons, grandsons, and uncles. Of course, with the exception of the very few foreign ladies who have been able to make themselves acceptable to their Chinese sisters, no direct missionary

influence can possibly find entrance within these jealously guarded homes.

But Chinese women are quite as intelligent as those of other lands, and though very few can read even their own dull books, and much of their time is occupied in gossip, the care of their clothes, and ceaseless offerings of food and other gifts on the household altars, either to the gods or to their own ancestors, they can grasp a new idea, and ponder over it, and if it commends itself to them, they hold it with surprising tenacity, and endeavour to impress it on their neighbours. Hence it is that the staunch Chinese converts, both men and women, so frequently become active witnesses for the Truth.

Now it is evident that each blind woman who can be taught to read the Holy Scriptures, will readily obtain access to some of these secluded homes, where she will certainly be a centre of unbounded interest, and may become a living power. Sooner or later, her words will impress many, and thus the truth will make its way insensibly amongst the mothers who exercise such life-long influence over their sons—an influence now bitterly antagonistic to Christianity, on account of its enmity to that worship and propitiation of the dead (ANCESTRAL WORSHIP) which is the main principle of Chinese life.* It is a big and

* In my WANDERINGS IN CHINA (published by Blackwood), I have given very full details of this extraordinary system of religion, and of the manner in which it permeates every phase of Chinese life; also of some points of deep interest in the working of various Christian Missions, and I venture to ask all who are interested in the subject to refer to these chapters.

powerful giant ; but as weak things of the earth are so often chosen to confound the mighty, there is good reason to believe that these humble blind readers are destined to prove powerful agents in the fight, and in undermining this citadel.

As yet, owing to Chinese prejudice on this subject, Mr. Murray has only been allowed to teach one blind woman, namely, a handsome newly-married girl of eighteen, who had lost her sight shortly before her marriage. Her betrothed, however, proved faithful, and brought her to Mr. Murray's care, and in a few months she mastered the mysteries of reading, writing, and music, to her great joy. In this case both bride and bridegroom are Christians, and received their education at the American Mission. Hence the husband's consent to the wife's being taught by Mr. Murray.

Now, however, that the latter has returned to China as a married man, he hopes that the teaching of blind women will become easier, and that European and American ladies may be induced to study his system, and thus endeavour to obtain access to their sisters who so literally "sit in darkness."

Mr. Murray's brief visit to Scotland has been marked by another important change in his lot. In the course of some of his Bible-selling expeditions in remote districts, he has on several occasions been visited by unmistakably genuine converts, who had become so, solely from reading the written Word, perhaps accompanied by some teaching from another convert. These have come to him, asking for Christian baptism, although

fully realizing all the persecution that would probably ensue. It was most painful to have to explain to such earnest seekers that he was not qualified to bestow the Gift they desired, especially as it was more than probable that they might never again come in contact with any foreign missionary. Mr. Murray therefore resolved that on his return to Scotland he would ascertain whether any branch of the Christian Church could dispense with the usual lengthy course of Theological Training, and grant him Ordination after less than a year of special study. Finding that the United Presbyterian College in Edinburgh might possibly do so, he entered himself as a Divinity Student, and absorbed himself in the close study of Theology, Greek, and Hebrew, as a pleasant relaxation from the various Chinese and Tartar dialects in which he has been steeped for the last sixteen years.

It is pleasant to learn that the merits of this earnest student were so fully recognized, that eminent representatives of the three Battalions of the Presbyterian Regiment took part in his Ordination, the venerable Dr. Andrew Bonar of the Free Church, and the Rev. Dr. T. Elder Cumming of the Established Church, having gladly accepted the invitation of the United Presbyterian Synod to assist in the service, which was held in Berkeley Street Church, Glasgow, on the evening of the 23rd June, 1887.

Now it only remains for me to say that practical evidence of sympathy, in the form of donations in aid of this very promising

Mission, will be gladly welcomed by WILLIAM J. SLOWAN, ESQ., SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL BIBLE SOCIETY OF SCOTLAND, 224, WEST GEORGE STREET, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND.

The Bible Society does not recognize that the preparation of the Holy Scriptures for the use of successive generations of this vast multitude of darkened lives, lies within its own province. It has, however, agreed to pay a small annual sum towards the expense of preparing and printing stereotype plates for the use of the blind, and a special effort has been made in the last year to raise an independent fund in aid of Mr. Murray's work, and several influential members of the Bible Society have agreed to act as trustees for this promising Mission, which has thus secured a recognized official position.

I would earnestly entreat all who have already helped it, not to allow their interest in the subject to flag, but on the contrary, to do all in their power to awaken that of others. For though I am fully convinced that this Blind Agency is destined to do a very great work in China, it is as yet only a Baby-Giant, and stands greatly in need of the care of as many foster-mothers as possible—(in the way of collectors).

As yet, all we have succeeded in raising, is a sum sufficient to enable us to purchase the School premises in Peking, which have hitherto been rented for the use of the Blind Students, and further to guarantee an annual payment of £75 towards Mr. Murray's salary, that the Bible Society may set him free to devote half his time exclusively to preparing the Holy Scriptures

and other books for the use of the blind, and otherwise developing his system.

This was the primary necessity ; so we have still to look to the public for all the needful funds for maintenance of indigent students and other desirable and—from a Mission point of view—remunerative outlay.



MURRAY'S SYSTEM FOR TEACHING THE BLIND OF CHINA.

BY THE REV. W. H. MURRAY,

School for the Blind, Peking.

The plan that would most naturally commend itself to one wishing to teach the blind, would be to adopt phonetic spelling. I found, however, that "numeral" spelling was greatly to be preferred.

Chinese, as a spoken language, may be reduced to 408 syllables. Now I take a representative written hieroglyphic of each of these 408 syllables, and for my own convenience, place them in alphabetic order in a horizontal line. The Chinese know nothing of alphabets.

Then in a line running parallel above that line of representative sounds, I write its equivalent in numerals; but instead of figures I use mnemonic letters, viz. T or D represents 1, N stands for 2, M is 3, R is 4, L stands for 5, Sh is 6, K is 7, F or V means 8, P or B is 9, and S stands for 0.

Then, as the Chinese have no alphabet, I choose simple syllables, as Ti for simple T or D, Ni or No for Q, &c. Therefore the two lines run thus:—

Ti	Ni	Mi	Rhi	Li	—mnemonics.
Gna	Gnai	Gnan	Gnang	Gnao	—Chinese.

Shih Kei Fei Pei Tze :—mnemonics.
 Cha C'ha Chai C'hai Chan :—Chinese.

EXPLANATION.

These are the first ten mnemonic words, Chinese equivalents that stand for the numbers, and written in a large character, begin the sentence, which, according to the custom of ordinary Chinese books, is written perpendicularly, and is read from top to bottom.

The under line represents ten of the 408 Chinese syllables, and these also in a larger character than the intermediary ones, are at the bottom, and finish the sentence. Thus: TI, shih, shuan, tsai, t'ien, shang, che, hua, shih, nan, hsin, GNA.

There are thus 408 simple sentences, and the pupil is required to commit these to memory, and thenceforth to write the one, and read it as the other. This he does like a chain of events, and in a very short time, at the rate of about twenty sentences in a day. This is, in fact, his spelling lesson. I know that this description must appear complicated, but in daily practice it is found to be quite the reverse.

The superiority of this method over "spelling" is immense. As an example of its advantages I would instance the Chinese word "C'huang Q" = a bed. It would require *eight* letters to spell this word, but by this plan I only need *three*, i.e. units, tens, and hundreds. There are no spaces or contractions to be a burden to the memory.

Then we only require ten numerals for our "alphabet." But I saw the advantage of employing the other letters thus: namely, using the deep letters, as K, L, M, N, in four sets of four to stand in the first space to represent the hundreds, and by that means they would answer a double purpose, namely, indicate also to which of the four "tones" the word belongs, each having a choice of four letters for each of the 408 sounds.

Let the sound and the number of its tone be indicated along with its aspirate, which is thus—C'huang Q, and be understood to be the hundredth in the order of the syllabary; and as regards the four "Tones" to belong in that sense (*i.e. a bed*) to the second. The letters K, L, M, N equal 100, and in that order indicate the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th Tone. Then LOO equals C'huang Q. A person acquainted with the Braille alphabet will perceive that as only three letters are thus required, the L takes top, middle and lowest points, while the first line of Braille, which supplies tens and units, has only top and middle points, and consequently the word has always one deep letter, and two hollow, making a wedge-like form: Hence there is no need to separate the words in writing, and thus all space between words is saved, which of itself is no small gain, and at the same time greatly simplifies the fingering to the reader.

When time, material, expense, storage, and portorage are considered, it will be seen how important are all these points, which tend to reduce the inevitable bulk of books for the

blind. The fact of each word being represented by three letters, and having thus a definite length and somewhat triangular form, is a great advantage in stereotyping.

It occurred to me that I could simplify the process of stereotyping, so instead of holding the punch in one hand, and having only the tip of the little finger to guide, while the other hand holds the mallet, I designed a table with a lever at one side, and a mallet to work by a treadle,—the mallet always to strike the centre of the table, and squared off the plain, over which the block would have to describe. The treadle is of course worked by foot, and with side woods, the width of two words, and woods the width of a double line, which exactly correspond in size with the latter; for the guide in shifting the block upwards in the plain of the fixed mallet, as the other, the side woods keep the position sideways; the stereotyper moves these as he finishes two words at a time, the top piece, at the finishing of the double line, is taken from the top, and pushing up the block, he puts that wood at the next foot, and then the block is in proper position for striking the next, and is firm and fast in its position.

Thus, the right hand, which would otherwise have had to hold the mallet, is left free to handle the manuscript, and to relieve the tip of the little finger, and take to guiding. Now, with us the process is so simplified that the operator can pell-mell with great speed and pleasure.

The advantage will appear best in the results, when I tell

you that the boy can do with ease in one day what would take three men and one-third in England to do in the same time. So what a sighted man would take twelve months to do, my blind boy will do in three months, and the quality of the work is struck more perfectly.



PART II.

(See page 33.)

“THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS.”

BY MISS C. F. GORDON-CUMMING.

IN Mission work, above all things, the tendency of the impatient human mind is to crave immediate wide-spread results altogether out of proportion to the efforts made. There is reason to fear that this undue expectation has given rise, in some quarters, to something of a feeling of disappointment that Mr. Murray's work for the Blind in China should still be so limited in its sphere, and confined to pupils so low in the social scale.

That so excellent a system should not have, as yet, been adopted by all the Mission Societies working in various parts of the Empire, and that the small school at Peking should still be its sole centre is, assuredly, much to be regretted; but comfort must be found in recollecting the analogy of progress in the natural world, where the stateliest and most enduring trees are those of slowest growth; and where a small plant transported to a new region at first makes but little show, yet after the lapse of a few years it may have increased and multiplied beyond the most sanguine expectations; and birds and winds, carrying seed from the parent plant, have started fresh centres of growth in most unexpected places. So this work is still in its infancy, and is only now beginning to take firm root even in Peking, which

was its birthplace. As yet only a few seeds have come to maturity, yet even these have already been carried hither and thither to far distant points ; and there is good reason to hope that from several of what seem the tiniest beginnings, fresh blind schools may be developed.

As regards the school at Peking, all its business details are regulated by a local committee of some of the leading missionaries and laymen. These have succeeded in purchasing one of the adjoining properties, thus giving room for the more healthy lodging of the blind lads, a separate compound for the accommodation of girls and women, and, generally, freer scope for the enlargement of the Mission so as to secure its perpetuity.

Hitherto the slow development of the girls' school has been disappointing, so very few girls and women having as yet availed themselves of the privileges offered to them. As we all know, the greatest boons are not always eagerly accepted by those who need them most, and the Chinese notions of propriety as regards the seclusion of women are so strict that even poor peasants could not come to be taught by Mr. Murray, or in the same enclosure as the blind men.

Those, however, who contrived to learn, did so with the same facility as the men. One blind woman (though she might not receive instruction from the foreign teacher) induced a little blind boy to come and teach her his own daily lessons, and thus she acquired the arts of reading and writing, and of

playing the concertina, and became the teacher of the few blind girls who, after Mr. Murray's marriage, ventured to come to the school. At the close of the first year, however, she had only four young pupils, including a poor little girl three years of age, who had recently lost her sight from small-pox, in consequence of which the woman who had adopted her as a daughter, resolved to poison her. Happily a foreign lady heard of the case and rescued the poor little mite, who became the pet of the blind family, and may, it is hoped, be trained to a career of usefulness.

Of the girls subsequently admitted, Mi Chia, fourteen years of age, was sent by the American Mission, Peking. She had gradually lost all but the dimmest vision. The other, Fri Pi (an easily recognizable Bible name, Mr. Murray says !), ten years of age, came from a London Mission Station two days' journey south of Peking. It was a striking testimony to the simplicity and effectiveness of Mr. Murray's system, that in six weeks these "two bashful little girls mastered the Primer, and could read, spell, and write correctly," while at the same time they were learning Sunday-school lessons, and to sing hymns by heart.

The Female school being now satisfactorily separated from the Boys' school, was beginning to make some way, under the care of a respectable Chinese matron, when it received a serious temporary check owing to her severe and prolonged illness, which it is now feared must end fatally, and the difficulty of replacing her is very great. At the close of

1891, her daughter-in-law arrived—a hopeful-looking, kindly, bright person—but whether she will be equal to so responsible a post is as yet uncertain.

Before her illness, the matron escorted one of the blind women who went to read and explain the Scriptures in one of the better-class families, a beginning of the work which is so very desirable. Their reception was most encouraging. But the possibilities of extending this work are limited not only by the difficulty of getting suitable blind women to undertake it, but also by the fact, that each must be escorted by a thoroughly trustworthy woman endowed with sight, as grave evil might ensue were the blind girls allowed to enter heathen homes without an escort. This of course involves a considerable extra expense.

When one thinks of the many thousands of blind girls and women in China, who could so easily be taught reading, writing and to play the concertina, as an accompaniment to the sacred lyrics which invariably prove so fascinating to Oriental ears, and when one realizes how welcome such teachers would be in the Zenanas, where the many million mothers of China are training their sons in the ceaseless propitiation of their own ancestors, it is distressing that this admirable work, so certain of eventual success, cannot be more rapidly developed. However, the small seed has been carefully sown, and there is every reason to hope that when once started it may grow rapidly.

But it must be remembered that for the present most of the blind girls who can be induced to come and be taught must be gleaned from the indigent classes ; and as they can no longer earn their daily bread by begging, funds must be provided for their support. A sum of about £10 will keep such a woman during a year's tuition, or subsequently, as a Scripture-reader—the board and salary of a sighted escort will, however, just double this outlay. But even at this advanced figure, SURELY SOME WHO READ THIS STATEMENT WILL UNDERTAKE TO PROVIDE THIS SUM ANNUALLY, AND THUS SEND THEIR OWN BIBLE-READER TO A FEW OF THE DULL HOMES OF THEIR CHINESE SISTERS?

The last news from the school is that two American lady-doctors had taken one of the blind girls, Lu Tê (which is the Chinese equivalent of Ruth) to the country, where they found her most useful in the hospital in reading to the patients. This she does specially well, being endowed with a rich voice. The patients were delighted, and this seems to point to a good field for blind readers, which, however, has for the present been checked by a curiously characteristic difficulty, namely that the ignorant and superstitious people stirred up the old malicious story about missionaries bewitching Chinese people, and extracting their eyes to prepare foreign medicine, and poor Ruth was pointed out as an example of one so bewitched, consequently it has been deemed prudent, for the present, to send her back to Mr. Murray's care.

Great indeed is the prudence necessary for those who seek to do good in China! Some years ago, when Mr. Murray had the option of leaving the service of the National Bible Society of Scotland in order to devote his whole time to developing his work for the blind, he refused, saying that if he once got out of touch with the people, who were now familiar with him from his Bible-selling in the streets, they would soon forget him, and ascribe the teaching of the blind to witchcraft, and very likely come and pull down his schools. Therefore he decided to devote half of his time to each work.

The street bookselling also helps to attract attention to the school. Thus, in a recent letter, Mr. Murray tells of a visit from one of the eunuchs of the Imperial Palace, who, observing the sale of Bibles in the street, found his way to the premises of the Blind Mission, where he bought a number of books and inspected the school. One of the pupils wrote to his dictation and he carried off the paper, which may thus receive attention within the Palace.

It is scarcely to be expected that the Chinese themselves should make any special effort to send pupils to be trained at a school where every influence is used to convert the students to the Christian faith, and, as yet, no pupils of any social standing have availed themselves of Mr. Murray's tuition. Consequently, the average number of about fourteen lads continues to be recruited from the lowest of the people. Yet

the wonderful rapidity with which those who are willing to be taught succeed in mastering the difficulties of reading, writing, and also of both writing and reading music, clearly proves how vast a field this work is destined to cover when once it becomes rightly known and understood in a land so slow to adopt any novelty.

Mr. Murray may be excused for a little pardonable pride in regard to lads who have been described as "salvage from the slums of Peking." "Now," he says, "it is a sight to see them at church. There are no Chinamen like them, so healthy, clean, and bright;" and several have already been sent forth thoroughly trained, to work under missionaries in other provinces.

Of course, it would be folly to expect that the flesh and the devil could allow so excellent a work to proceed unmarred, especially considering amid what utterly debasing influences most of these poor lads have hitherto lived. As regards blind adults, the majority are so utterly depraved that it is only in exceptional cases that Mr. Murray attempts to train one; and even these have, in several instances, caused him bitter disappointment, and he has, at various times, found it necessary for the good of all to expel both men and lads on whom he had lavished much care and patience.

But, then, the bright stars compensate for many sorrows. One of the early pupils has proved so trustworthy and so zealous in well-doing, that Mr. Murray has, for some years,

been able to dispense with the services of his sighted Chinese assistant. To quote his own words: "Blind Peter, the young man of our own training, is now at the head of affairs in the school, and has proved the best teacher we could have, in pushing the boys forward. He drills them well, and is fully qualified to advance them in all the branches, especially in music, vocal and instrumental. He is quite a musical genius, and has written out and learnt by heart all our hymns. He is now the regular organist of the London Mission Chapel, and is invariably invited to play when he attends any Chinese meeting in the various English or American chapels. I have been advised to apply, on his behalf, for the post of organist to the Emperor, who has now got an organ for himself. But I think that he has nobler position where he is, and will do and get more good in teaching his blind countrymen."

So Peter is established as the responsible head of the school, and an event of great interest in the blind family has been his marriage to a very pleasant-looking girl trained by Mrs. Lowrie in the American Presbyterian School, and who consequently was allowed a voice in the selection of her husband. She stated her views in most matter-of-fact terms to the woman who acts as professional go-between, to arrange such family matters. "When I think of the class of husbands that are offered," she said, "I would much prefer Blind Peter, who looks better, is better, and is an accomplished young man whom all admire." She added that she hoped to

be able to help him in his usefulness. So as her widowed mother and elder brother approved, the damsel allowed her hair to hang over her forehead in a fringe, which in China is the recognized sign of an engaged maiden, the marriage contract was drawn up on a sheet of lucky scarlet paper, and marriage settlements were arranged according to Chinese custom by Peter undertaking to make a regular allowance to his mother-in-law.

Now a very attractive photograph of the young couple has been received, as have also two very pathetic groups of the school, one representing Mr. Murray with twelve sightless men and boys, the other showing eight blind Chinese women and children round Mrs. Murray and two of her little ones, baby Nathanael, dressed as a little Chinaman, and Dora who chatters all day in the prettiest pure mandarin Chinese. To these have now been added another little daughter, and Mr. Murray rejoices in his flock as the missionaries of the future.

Reviewing the work in the boys' school at the close of 1891, Mr. Murray says: "We have fifteen boys, and all are healthy and apt students. In addition to reading, writing, and music, they now learn geography and arithmetic. I have had a whole series of maps punched out on tin sheets, and the divisions numbered for convenient reference. The whole cost two dollars! The work was done by a needy scholar from a flooded part of the country. He first drew the outline on thin paper; this was pasted on to the tin sheet, with the draw-

ing next the tin. The lines thus reversed showed through sufficiently to guide the punch ; thus they appear on the other side of the tin in raised outline, suitable for the blind pupils to finger."

The arithmetic lesson is wholly mental, and is taught by means of a *memoria technica* utterly perplexing to the foreign mind, but to the Chinese wondrously simple. Mr. Murray gives out long sentences, of which each word has a recognized equivalent in figures, and on the following day, solely from memory, the boys or girls give the result in a long, accurately worked-out sum—perhaps in compound multiplication.

An extraordinary cultivation of the mechanical memory is one of the most striking characteristics of all Chinese education, so that an exercise which to us would be distasteful and laborious seems simple and easy to the Chinese, and most of all to the blind.

Certainly from the extraordinary powers of memory with which some of the students are endowed, it seems as though this special compensation was often bestowed on those who are deprived of the blessing of sight. Mr. Murray tells of one of his pupils who had not only written out St. Matthew's gospel, but could repeat the whole perfectly by heart. Another had likewise committed to memory the whole of St. Mark. Others know every hymn in the hymn-book (containing about one hundred and forty hymns).

The daily routine of learning goes on as already described,

to the evident enjoyment of the students.* All emboss from dictation, while to the more advanced workers is entrusted the stereotyping on brass sheets of pages of the Holy Scriptures. The Gospels have long been in circulation, each forming one concise volume such as the smallest lad can conveniently carry under his arm. Now the Book of Psalms and several more of the Old Testament and most of the Epistles are ready—others are in course of preparation.

On this subject Mr. Murray writes: "We do the work ourselves in school, stereotyping, printing, and binding, so it costs nothing, being done as part of the boys' course of lessons." Consequently, he is able to offer copies of each book for sale at an amazingly low price, as compared with that of books for the use of the blind embossed in this country. Sighted men have, however, to assist in embossing from the stereotyped sheets, and a reader has to go over all the work most carefully, as the arrangement of the verses is far more difficult to the blind than ordinary writing would be.

Six of the smallest boys are now daily sent to read the Holy Scriptures in the intervals between the daily services at several of the Mission Chapels and hospitals. These little lads read with the greatest coolness and courage, and with a fluency, accuracy, and excellent intonation, to which Chinese scholars gifted with eyesight rarely attain in reading from their hieroglyphics. Hundreds of their countrymen go daily to

* See "Work for the Blind," Part I. pp. 23 to 25.

hear them, and certainly God is blessing HIS WORD in the mouth of these babes, who themselves seem to be really impressed with the responsibility and honour thus laid upon them.

One of the brightest of these lads, and the sweetest singer, was brought to the school by a man who had rescued him from a most horrible death; his cruel father, not caring to be troubled with a blind son, having thrown him into a foul pit of semi-liquid sheep's dung, and there left the poor little minstrel to suffocate. Happily he was rescued just in time, and his singing is none the less joyous for that terrible experience. Another of these lads reads the "Peep of Day" (William Burn's translation) to the patients in the London Mission Hospital. As the book has not yet been embossed, he writes out one chapter every forenoon, and by eleven o'clock is ready to march off with it to the hospital, where he reads it over and over again to successive groups of patients. "Could a ready writer with eyes do more?" asks Mr. Murray. Mr. Murray says: "If you could only hear how easily and fluently both boys and girls can read! it comes up to my brightest hopes. A young woman reads at our morning family prayers, and the little boys by turns in the evening. The other day Blind Peter was to give the address, so he asked a lad to read Romans iv. We could not but admire the speed and precision with which he read, and afterwards I made him read three chapters right through, while I took the time by my watch. The chapters I selected were the 3rd, 4th, and 5th. He took

exactly four and a half minutes to the 3rd, the same to the 4th, and five minutes to the last. Nothing could be more desirable than that ! I feel a great delight in mentioning this, for I never in Edinburgh or Glasgow heard anything like it, and I am sure that nothing could surpass this. Think how the fingers look to see this ! they seem hardly to touch the paper, but glide over the page like those of a skilled player over the key-board of a piano !”

“After sending the boy back to school, I read the same chapters while Mrs. Murray held the watch. I read as quickly as people usually read the sacred volume, and the time I took was as nearly as possible the same. I consider it a triumph that the Chinese boy without eyes should be able to read as quickly as I did with eyes !”

One difficulty in a city of such enormous distances as Peking is, that it would be impossible for these little blind lads to walk daily to their respective reading stations, so it is necessary to hire one of the curious Chinese carts to carry them. Mr. Murray justly observes that it would be cheaper, as well as more convenient, to have a van and horse belonging to the Mission. Perhaps some friend may be inclined to bestow this boon.

Another special gift greatly needed is an infirmary, on however humble a scale, so as to make it possible to isolate cases of infectious illness, such as must frequently occur in the heart of such a city as Peking. The need for such an asylum was sorely proved when a very promising pupil died of consump-

tion, and a little blind girl was seriously ill with typhus fever, at the very time when Mrs. Murray herself, and also a young blind married woman, required the utmost care and quiet. And all this within the confined space of a small Chinese court! At another time scarlet fever was so rife in the city that funerals were constantly passing along the street. There were two cases in the Blind school, causing great anxiety lest the infection should spread, and many a wish for the isolation of the patients.

In 1890 there were trials of various sorts—incurions of thieves, widespread sickness in the city, a succession of dust storms, and of such appalling rains as flooded vast districts of the Empire. Though Peking suffered less than many other places, great damage was done, and the inmates of the Blind schools had their full share of anxiety and trouble. Furthermore it was deemed desirable to send three adult pupils back to their villages. Two were men over forty years of age, whose progress was slow, and who sometimes found it difficult to conform to the discipline of the school. Two very promising lads died. One of these, Wang, a beggar lad of fourteen, showed considerable ability. "It was a pleasure to teach him." A friend in Canada had undertaken his support, and all seemed to promise well; but he only lived long enough to give evidence of a new life begun—dying after he had been seven months under Mr. Murray's care.

The second death was that of a lad from the United

Presbyterian Mission in Manchuria, who had been in the school a year, was a capable, diligent pupil, and, better still, gave evidence of true conversion. Everything that love could do was done for these poor lads.

Mr. Murray was also sorely grieved by the death of another, Wang, a former pupil who had for some time been studying under the Rev. Jonathan Lees at Tientsin, where he acted as organist to the Mission, and also went daily to the Hospital to read and speak to the heathen patients. Though blind, he was at the head of his classes, and was just finishing his training when his health broke down. Mr. and Mrs. Murray went to see him, and though he could hardly speak, he expressed so great a wish to return to his old home and friends in the Blind school at Peking, that arrangements were made for his return. But one fiercely cold night, with a wind blowing from Siberia, the spitting of blood returned, and could not be checked. Poor Wang was heard to pray that God would take him soon, for he was past work on earth. And God took him. He was much loved, and was so wise and good, that his death was a real loss.

His place at Tientsin has now been filled by Tê Kwang, another blind student who has hitherto been organist to an American chapel in Peking, and reader in an hospital.

For some time the question of how to keep up a correspondence with his former pupils, now widely scattered, sorely taxed Mr. Murray's ingenuity, as, of course, in passing through

the post, the embossed letters were almost certain to be so crushed as to become illegible even to the sensitive fingers of the blind. He therefore set himself to devise an envelope which should protect the large sheets of embossed paper, without undue weight, and presently bethought him of a pile of old oil and sugar tins. Enlisting the services of a Chinese tinker, he had these converted into small tin tubes just large enough to hold a loosely-rolled sheet of embossed paper, which is secured by a thread, and a rough paper on the outside bears the address in the usual Chinese characters.

These tubes are produced at a cost of less than a farthing, and the Imperial Chinese Post carries them as book-packets, so that the poor blind folk obtain this great advantage at the smallest possible cost, and of course these cylinders can travel to and fro many times; so now they are constantly carrying messages of counsel and love to Hankow, Tientsin, and Manchuria, and bringing back tidings of how they fare. Moreover, it is an immense pleasure to the students to write out every newly-translated hymn or hymn tune, and despatch it to their friends, who are thus kept in touch with the progress of the school.

Perhaps the most strikingly interesting of Mr. Murray's pupils is Mr. Ch'ang, a blind man from Manchuria, that vast province where, as yet, the only representatives of the Christian faith are at small Roman Catholic and Irish and Scottish Presbyterian Missions. The simple story of this man's con-

version is, in itself, an all-sufficient answer to those who are disposed to cavil at the slow return of missionary efforts. He was a member of the Hwun Yuen, the most zealous sect of Taoists, and when thirty years of age had been stricken with blindness while prostrated before his favourite idol, a calamity which seems to have inclined him to give more earnest heed to the words of the foreign teachers.

From his mountain village he found his way to the Medical Mission of the United Presbyterian Church, at Moukden, which is a city of about 250,000 inhabitants—a tiny light kindled in the midst of the great idolatrous city. Nothing could be done for his sight; but the teaching which he heard struck home, and took root so deeply, that ere a month had expired he asked to be admitted to Christian baptism. With what seems an excess of caution, his teacher deemed it right to insist on a period of probation; and so poor blind Ch'ang was dismissed without this outward sign of his new faith, only with a promise that ere long his friend would follow and seek him in his mountain village.

But the multitude of cares and pressure of work proved more than one overtaxed man could meet, so that six months elapsed ere Mr. Webster was able to redeem his promise, and then had considerable difficulty in reaching this remote village. He was much surprised, however, in a country where blindness is common, to find how well known this poor blind man seemed to be; and when at length he reached the village of

which he was in search, and which apparently had never been visited by any foreigner, instead of being received with the usual shouts of "foreign devil" he was cordially welcomed by Mr. Li, the village schoolmaster, who expressed his pleasure that "the pastor had at length arrived," and told him how Ch'ang had gone forth on what, since his return from Moukden, had been his daily occupation, namely, that of travelling from village to village (across the muddy swamps and over the steep hill paths, which had proved so difficult and wearisome to the foreigner gifted with sight), in order to tell the people about "this religion of Jesus," sometimes in the evenings collecting hundreds of hearers beneath the shade of the willow trees or getting smaller congregations in such houses as would receive him.

At first everyone laughed at him, or pitied him, thinking him crazy, but after a while, as he persevered and gave practical proof of true holiness of life, public opinion became divided. Some were for him and some against him; some blessed him, some cursed him. But week after week the blind man persevered, daily praying for help from on high, singing the one hymn he had been taught in the hospital, and then going forth alone, groping his darkened way with his staff, and ceaselessly telling to all who would listen, the good news of ETERNAL LIFE BY JESUS CHRIST.

"And the result of all this," said Mr. Li, "is that a large number earnestly inquired about his 'doctrine,' and heartily

believe, and desire to become members of the religion of Jesus."

Presently Ch'ang himself returned, and his joy on hearing of his friend's arrival was most pathetic. Tears dropped from his sightless eyes as he exclaimed (in a manner which clearly proved how many had scoffed at the blind man's faith in his friend's promise)—"O pastor, I always said you WOULD come!" Very quickly he despatched messengers to various villages, whence his converts soon arrived, and these, one by one, in the simplest language, and with an indescribable warmth of feeling and earnestness of purpose, gave expression to a faith so unmistakably genuine, that on the morrow nine of them, headed by their sightless teacher, received that holy baptism which all fully recognized as the outward symbol of a faith exposing those who profess it to the chance of persecution even unto death, in such horrid forms as has recently been the lot of many of China's martyrs. Several others likewise desired to be baptized, but were required to wait for fuller instruction.

"One thing of which I am well assured," says Mr. Webster, "is this: Blind Ch'ang, with little knowledge, but with a heart thrilled to the core with the truth which he knew, had in these months done more work and better work for the kingdom of heaven than half-a-dozen foreign missionaries could have done in as many years. And this is only one of many proofs that China must be evangelized by the Chinese."

It was evidently worth a very special effort to send this heaven-taught evangelist to Peking, there to attend the school for the blind. Naturally the idea that he could ever be taught to read and write seemed to him like a fable. Nevertheless, accompanied by a delicate blind lad, whose friends wished him also to acquire this wonderful knowledge, he started on his journey to the coast, and then on the long voyage across the Yellow Sea and up the Peiho, though with small hope of any such blessed result. To his own infinite surprise, within three months he had so thoroughly mastered the arts of reading and writing, and also of writing and reading music, that he was able to take a pupil and instruct him in all these arts.

Fain would Mr. Murray have detained him to receive a lengthened course of tuition, but the continued illness of the blind lad of whom he had undertaken charge, and the opportunity of a return voyage for both at a cheap rate, added to his longing to begin at once imparting all his new knowledge to his countrymen, decided Ch'ang to return at once.

"Three months ago," he said, "I came, though believing it to be impossible for a blind man to learn to read and write. Now, praise God for His wonders to me! I can read and write anything, and instead of having to remember all as a burden on my memory, I have several books which I have written out myself. But my countrymen are all heathen, and I must go and show them what the Lord has done for me, and preach His blessed Gospel to them."

He was provided with such portions of the Holy Scriptures as have been stereotyped by the blind students at the Peking school, and with a new writing-frame ; and now Mr. Murray is occasionally gladdened by a letter in embossed type from Ch'ang himself, who, with the delicate blind lad as his constant and devoted companion, continues his daily itinerating, reading the Holy Word to all the wondering crowds who assemble to see a blind man read with the tips of his fingers. About the close of 1890 he returned to Peking for further instruction on various points, and is now working zealously as ever in the Manchurian Mountains.

In the autumn of 1892 (a year of bitter persecution and wide-spread anxiety, especially unfavourable to the extension of Mission work) his converts were found to number considerably over three hundred souls, of whom more than half had been admitted to baptism, the others being still on probation.

Of adult scholars still under tuition, one of the most hopeful is a young man of the name of Hsii. He had been a fortune-teller, and a man of immoral character. He sought medical advice at the London Mission Hospital, where he heard the Gospel preached, and was truly converted. Owing to the nature of his disease, he could not be received at the Blind school, but being remarkably intelligent, he rapidly mastered the Primer with the aid of a sighted boy, who had learned it in order to acquire Mr. Murray's system of shorthand writing.

Then he returned to the school to crave a lesson in fingering, and gave such convincing proof of his earnest desire to live a new life, that Mr. Murray undertook to teach him.

“I sinned,” he said, “because I did not know GOD. Henceforth I desire to serve HIM only, and to be able to read HIS WORD.”

By the fifth day he could finger so freely that he was able to read two chapters of Romans correctly, and within a fortnight he was brought before the Peking Board of Directors of the school, and read several passages correctly. Someone dictated a very out-of-the-way sentence, which he wrote, and then a blind boy was called in from the school, and at once read it correctly.

He is a musician, able to play on dulcimer, banjo, and guitar. Now he is learning both piano and harmonium, and it is hoped that he will gain admission to the homes of the well-to-do class who have blind sons wishing to be taught. He reads and writes out hymns, and studies the scriptures diligently.

His heathen relations, who foresaw the loss of considerable gain in his giving up fortune-telling, did all in their power to prevent his doing so; his step-father captured and beat him, stripping him of all the clothes given him at the Mission, except one light garment. But Hsii stood firm and made his way back to his friends. He has now been admitted to baptism.

As a beginning of work he has been provided with a table

and two folding stools, for himself and his companion, and he now sits in the street, reading. The 10*l.* a year requisite for his maintenance is provided by a friend in Prince Edward's Island.

Speaking of musical instruments, Mr. Murray gives some suggestive details of the difficulties of keeping these in repair, in a climate subject to such excessive heat and cold (to say nothing of their being subject to such incessant practising!). Finding that those in the school had become semi-dumb, he called in the aid of the invaluable Blind Peter, and a Chinese tinker, and took them to pieces, when he found reeds broken, soundboards split, and bellows burst. With much ingenuity they contrived to repair these so thoroughly, that the instruments were again fit for use. When one thinks of three harmoniums and a piano all going simultaneously, in so confined a space (to say nothing of so many human voices, including those of young children), and that in such summer heat as makes noise almost unendurable, one cannot but pity those whose lot is cast within earshot thereof!

As regards that multiplication of blind readers, which at first suggested itself so attractively, Mr. Murray strongly deprecates the idea that a great number of students can be brought to the school, taught in a few days to read and write, and then sent back to the streets to live the awful lives common to the adult blind. He maintains that in order to obtain good moral results, the pupils must almost invariably

be taken in hand in early youth, and carefully trained till they come to years of discretion, when he counts on their having become trustworthy Christian lads, ready to go as organists, preachers and Scripture readers to any Mission requiring their services, in any part of the Empire.

An endowment of £200 will support one blind reader in perpetuity, for any city in China. Who will secure for himself such a representative in this great Mission-field?

In order to leave nothing untried, Mr. Murray has hired a Chinese weaving-loom, and secured the services of a weaver who is to endeavour to teach the blind. Should he succeed, the loom is to be purchased. Other blind students are learning to make door-mats and coarse matting for passages. They have already proved successful shoe-makers (the Chinese cloth shoe resembling a shapeless boat!).

The women have made some progress in knitting, and in sewing mattresses and pillows.

But as regards making them self-supporting by instruction in any of the usual industrial arts, Mr. Murray despairs of the blind ever being able to compete against the legions of sighted Chinese who already overcrowd the market for basket and cane work, knitting, weaving, etc., and who would inevitably undersell the produce of the blind. He says: "The Christian Church here is a mere handful of outcasts surrounded by hordes of unfriendly heathen. Where is the sympathy to encourage teaching the blind any handicraft? Even in

England, what would become of their industries apart from hearts in sympathy and open purses to help?"

So it appears that embossing and stereotyping, bookbinding and piano and harmonium-tuning and teaching, knitting, and perhaps shoemaking, are the most promising industries of the class usually considered suitable for the blind, and that their employment must lie chiefly in literary and musical work. They also write out books of embossed manuscript music, which they stitch and bind very decently.

Mr. Murray has, however, other schemes which promise to open up entirely new fields for his pupils. It has always seemed an anomaly that the blind Chinaman could, in six or eight weeks, learn to read and write more fluently than his sighted brother can do after as many years of hard study of the complicated Chinese symbols. But Mr. Murray is now trying to relieve the Chinese student with normal sight from these disadvantages.

It is now more than two years since he devised AN ADAPTATION OF HIS PRIMER BY WHICH SIGHTED PERSONS MAY BE TAUGHT TO READ FROM BLACK PRINTING WITH AS GREAT FACILITY AS THE BLIND NOW DO FROM EMBOSSED TYPE, and he counts on finding ample occupation for some of his blind pupils as compositors in printing the Bible and other books in this symbol, and also as teachers of sighted persons in reading the books thus printed.

In order, however, to prepare books for this purpose, special

type is requisite, and for this Mr. Murray has appealed again and again. For some time his requirements, and their need, were not understood in this country, so there has been a delay very trying to this eminently gifted genius, who, almost as soon as this new invention was perfected, wrote that he and a native assistant had already taught about thirty sighted persons, EACH OF WHOM ACQUIRED THE ART OF READING IN FOUR DAYS!

Now, however, his friend, Dr. Henderson, has raised a sum of £65 towards the cost of this new type, for which Mr. Archibald, of Hankow, prepared matrices, and the first instalment of type reached Peking just ere the close of 1891. There are fifty very simple and legible symbols which, by reversing some, make the sixty-two symbols requisite to convey all the tones.

As soon as they arrived, Blind Peter and one of the girls were asked to feel them, and at once recognized each, proving that there will be no difficulty in employing blind compositors and doing the work on the spot, thus saving an enormous amount of trouble in correction of proofs.

As no syllable ever involves the use of more than three symbols, while seven or eight would be necessary to represent the same sound by the use of Roman type, Mr. Murray reckons that he can print complete copies of the Bible one-third the size, and at one-third the cost of those printed in Roman letters, and moreover, showing at a glance the correct sound, aspirate, and "tone" of every word, which is a most important advantage.

To give the tones with Roman letters adds so enormously to the cost of printing, that in Southern and Central China they are ignored in all Romanized books, although without them the uncertainty of the language is very great. Only one Mission—the Presbyterian—has as yet attempted to print the Scriptures in Roman letters for use in North China, and the expense proved so great that the effort was given up. The inflections of sound are so delicate, and the meaning conveyed by the change of an accent is so very great, that even books and papers printed at Shanghai often contain such mistakes as to alter the whole sense, and sometimes make it ridiculous.

Murray says of his new system : “It is, I believe, the simplest letter-form in existence. It is equally well adapted to the North and South of China.” It can be read by pupils from all parts, just as his blind system is, and, as already stated, the blind scholars can be the teachers of the new comers, a splendid field of usefulness being thus opened up for them.

But Mr. Murray has now perfected yet another invention which bids fair to have a far-reaching influence for good, in that it will probably be received with enthusiasm by Chinese literary men, who are generally antagonistic to everything foreign. This is a system of SHORTHAND, so effective that those who have already mastered it, are able to produce a verbatim report of a whole sermon, and *it is so simple that the reporters have never the slightest difficulty in reading what they have written.*

Nothing of the nature of shorthand is known in China, and its possibility will be a new revelation to Chinese students. Murray writes concerning it: "I am in the field and know the need. This also can be taught by the blind; it is a chance for them that will never die." As a sample he encloses 1 Cor. xiii., written in eight lines of a light, almost running hand, beautifully clear. The writer is Tê-Lu, one of his boys who has now recovered the use of one eye sufficiently to read and write by sight. (*See pages 32, 33.*)

It is now necessary to say a few words concerning a misunderstanding which has caused Mr. Murray considerable annoyance.

Owing to his singularly retiring disposition, and to his being engrossed in devising and perfecting his numerous ingenious inventions for the good both of the blind and the sighted Chinese, his system, with all its wonderful possibilities, is still known only to a very limited circle, even of his brother missionaries.

It was therefore deemed desirable that he should attend the great Missionary Conference which was held at Shanghai in May, 1890, and there set forth its merits.

Thither he accordingly went, accompanied by Blind Peter, and read a descriptive paper, which, however lucid to Chinese hearers, seems to have somewhat perplexed his European audience. But when Peter's turn came to give practical illustrations of reading, writing, and playing the church organ,

his reception was enthusiastic. Several Missionaries from Peking who were present, testified from personal knowledge to the like ability of other boys and the girls in the Blind School.

Mr. Murray very unfortunately assumed that he had now done all that was required to secure support, and, being anxious to catch the return steamer to Peking, he forthwith departed without waiting to take part in the deliberations of the committee, which was subsequently appointed by the Conference to consider which of the various systems for the use of the blind should be adopted throughout China.

The supporters of several other systems were on the committee, and the truth of the old proverb, "The absent are always in the wrong," was once more proved, for, to the amazement of all who understood the practical working of Murray's system, a statement was circulated to the effect that it was not taken into consideration, not being considered sufficiently simple!

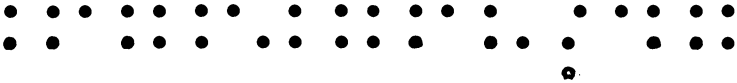
Thereupon, some of the missionaries and others who have for years watched the silent, unobtrusive progress of Murray's work at Peking, deemed it necessary to publish a counter-statement of the true facts. The paper commences by noting how the committee of the Shanghai Conference recommended, "*First*, a system of writing by initials and finals." *Secondly*, a system of spelling in the European method. While no mention was made of the fully proven successful work of Mr. Murray.

二 百 十 弟 離 似 平 遠 些 來 到 我 家 也 不 犯 作 客	二 百 九 弟 兒 北 邊 住 的 就 是 你 哥 哥	二 百 六 弟 兒 費 許 多 的 工 夫 為 甚 麼 刨 坑	十 二 替 你 還 這 筆 錢 你 更 該 我 的 賬	十 一 弟 打 兄 是 因 為 要 分 家 產	十 弟 撕 破 的 書 總 得 用 糝 糊 粘	九 北 山 上 有 好 些 樵 夫 打 柴	八 非 是 念 經 就 是 吃 齋	七 給 你 錢 不 是 叫 你 喝 酒 是 叫 你 喝 茶
□ □ □	□ □ □	□ □ □	□ □	□ □	□ □	□ □	□ □	□ □

A page from Murray's Primer, giving a sample of the four thousand Chinese symbols, and their simple equivalent in embossed dots, which in no case exceed three groups, representing units, tens, and hundreds.

Here are specimens of these different styles of writing.

Embossed for the blind.



Printed in black for the sighted, by filling in the outline of the points.



Shorthand of the above.



Curt style, without tones.



(The weak points in the above-named systems have been fully demonstrated, but do not claim further notice here except to explain briefly that the system of initials and finals is practically spelling phonetically. To render it, each province would require different styles. Whereas in Murray's school there are pupils from Shansi, Chihli, Shantung, etc., even Manchuria, all reading with equal facility from the same books, and writing the same.)

The paper continues, "It seems unfortunate that Mr. Murray's method (which may be called the mnemonic system, AND WHICH HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF ACHIEVED SUCCESS) was not included in the recommendations of the Conference, as at least worthy of a fair trial. Mr. Murray left Shanghai before the special committee on the instruction of the Blind was appointed, and hence could not be present to explain and advocate his system and show its actual results. The opportunity he had of presenting his work before the Conference in one of its regular sessions, was necessarily too brief to give such a detailed exposition of its method as a committee would require in order to judge intelligently of its merits.

"And with all due appreciation of Mr. Murray's ingenuity, patience and piety, his best friends are constrained to say that he is more skilful in devising and administering systems than in expounding them. Had he but an Aaron at his side, who could speak well, his system would long since have had many more intelligent adherents. Hence it is, that those are

best qualified to adjudge it, who have seen its operations and witnessed its victories.

“The main features of the Murray system are—*First*, the association of the 408 sounds of the mandarin syllabary with the numbers from 1 to 408. (It must be borne in mind that it is to Mr. Murray that we are indebted for the discovery that there are only 408 sounds in the language instead of upwards of 4000 as was commonly supposed, from the fact that the Chinese reader has to master upwards of 4000 elaborate symbols.)

“Every sound thus automatically suggests in the mind of the pupil its corresponding number, and every number its corresponding sound. This association is facilitated by a very ingenious yet simple set of 408 sentences ranged in order and numbered from 1 to 408, each of which begins with its number in due order and ends with its corresponding sound, so that by memorizing this list of sentences, each number is indissolubly connected with its corresponding sound, and *vice versa*.

“*Secondly*, these sentences once memorized, the pupil next applies them to reading and writing. Herein lies the peculiar simplicity of the system. Were it necessary to make 408 different arrangements of Braille’s six dots in order to represent 408 sounds, this would indeed prove an intolerable load to the memory of the pupil, and render the system too difficult for general use.

“On the contrary, it is only necessary to employ fifteen of

these separate arrangements or symbols to suggest all the sounds. Or if it is desired to express both tones and sounds, only thirty symbols will be required. Hence it can be truly said that the Murray system employs but fifteen of Braille's symbols for the reading and writing of Chinese without tones, while no other system yet devised employs less than sixty or seventy. There is certainly no want of simplicity here!

“A few words will show how this simplicity is attained. Suppose the ten numerals, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 0 are each represented by a particular one of Braille's symbols. It is clear that to represent the number 56, for instance, it is only necessary to prefix the symbol 5 to the symbol 6, and to represent 387, to place the symbols 3, 8 and 7 one after another. When the deft finger-tips are passed over the symbols 3, 8 and 7 in immediate succession, the ready mind instantly suggests the number 387, and by the law of association which, natural and unerring in the mind of the blind, takes the place of sight, the sentence in the Primer beginning 387 and closing with the sound *yáng*, springs into mental vision, and the pupil involuntarily utters the sound *yáng*.

“Similarly the entire 408 numbers can be represented by these ten symbols. But for the sake of distinguishing each word from the preceding, five initial symbols are added, used solely to represent the first numerals of the four groups of numerals between 100 and 199, 200 and 299, 300 and 399, 400 and 408, respectively, with an additional initial symbol

for the numbers between 1 and 99, so that when the fingertips rest upon any one of these five initial symbols, the pupil discerns the beginning of a new word.

“With this equipment of 408 sentences, and fifteen of Braille’s symbols, the pupil is ready either to read or write Chinese Mandarin Colloquial without the tones.

“Had a European to use the Murray system, he might possibly deem it laborious, but to call it elaborate and complicated is simply to expose one’s ignorance of its nature. It is elaborated without being elaborate, and complete without being complicated.

“It must always be borne in mind that a powerfully retentive mechanical memory is a distinguishing characteristic of the Chinese, and one which is developed to the uttermost by culture. Moreover, it is a special endowment of the blind, consequently the effort of memory which would seem oppressive to a foreigner, is as nothing to a Chinaman.

“Since the 408 sounds, even when the tones are expressed, require but thirty symbols for their representation, there still remain a large number of symbols for use in musical notation and punctuation. No symbol is ever employed for more than one purpose. Hence there is no confusion in the mind of the pupil arising from the use of the same symbol, now as a mere initial, and again as an entire word.

“*Finally*, THERE IS THE SUPREME TEST OF SUCCESSFUL TRIAL. The system works. Boys learn it; girls learn it. It

does not seem difficult to the pupils. Bright scholars master it in a fortnight; some have been known to read the Bible in a few days. Even dull ones can learn to read and write in a few months; the dullest in one year. This would be deemed rapid progress in ordinary foreign tongues. The asylum is now in full operation. From a little girl only four years old, who has almost completed her Primer, to men forty years of age, they may be seen reading, writing, stereotyping, printing, even writing music, and reading it from their own or other's copy.

“Can it be that this is the system too complicated for general use throughout China? Of its success in practical working we are all witnesses.

“Signed :—

J. W. LOWRIE, American Presbyterian Mission.

JOHN WHERRY, ditto ditto.

H. H. LOWRY, Methodist Episcopal Mission.

GEORGE OWEN, London Missionary Society.

EDWARD S. PRITCHARD, M.D.

WILLIAM S. AMENT, American Board Mission.

S. M. RUSSELL, T'ung-wen Kuan-Peking.

H. BLODGET, American Congregational Mission.”

And to these signatures might well have been added those of Dr. Atterbury, of the American Presbyterian Mission, Dr. John Dudgeon, the Hon. J. Réan, the Rev. W. H. Rees, and other Chinese scholars who are well acquainted with the actual working of the system.

In conclusion, I must remind my readers that this school, and the development of the work in its various branches, is altogether dependent on voluntary offerings, and that all such will be welcomed by the Hon. Treasurer, James Drummond, Esq., 58, Bath Street, Glasgow.

Among recent effectual helpers, I may mention the boys at two large schools in Perthshire. Their interest having been aroused by an account of Mr. Murray's work, each boy undertook the charge of a collecting card with a copy of the pamphlet, "WORK FOR THE BLIND IN CHINA," and at the end of the Christmas holidays found that their united efforts had produced a sum sufficient to support three blind pupils for a year.

If so good a result could be obtained at Christmas, when home calls are so numerous, what might not be collected if many other schools would follow this excellent example in the Easter holidays?

Collecting cards and pamphlets will be gladly forwarded by the Hon. Treasurer to any responsible person willing to undertake such a charge.

It is earnestly hoped that those who become interested in this work will not rest satisfied with giving only one donation, but resolve to become regular annual subscribers to the Mission.

Friends are also requested to endeavour to extend the interest in this work by distributing copies of this pamphlet,

and also of "WORK FOR THE BLIND IN CHINA," Part I., by C. F. GORDON-CUMMING. Published by Messrs. Gilbert & Rivington, St. John's House, Clerkenwell Road, London, E.C. Post free for $2/4\frac{1}{2}$ per dozen. *Also as a Gift-book*, "WORK FOR THE BLIND." Published by Messrs. Nisbet, Berners Street, London. Price 1/6.

Subscriptions and donations will be gladly received by Messrs. Honeyman & Drummond, Chartered Accountants, 58, Bath Street, Glasgow.





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