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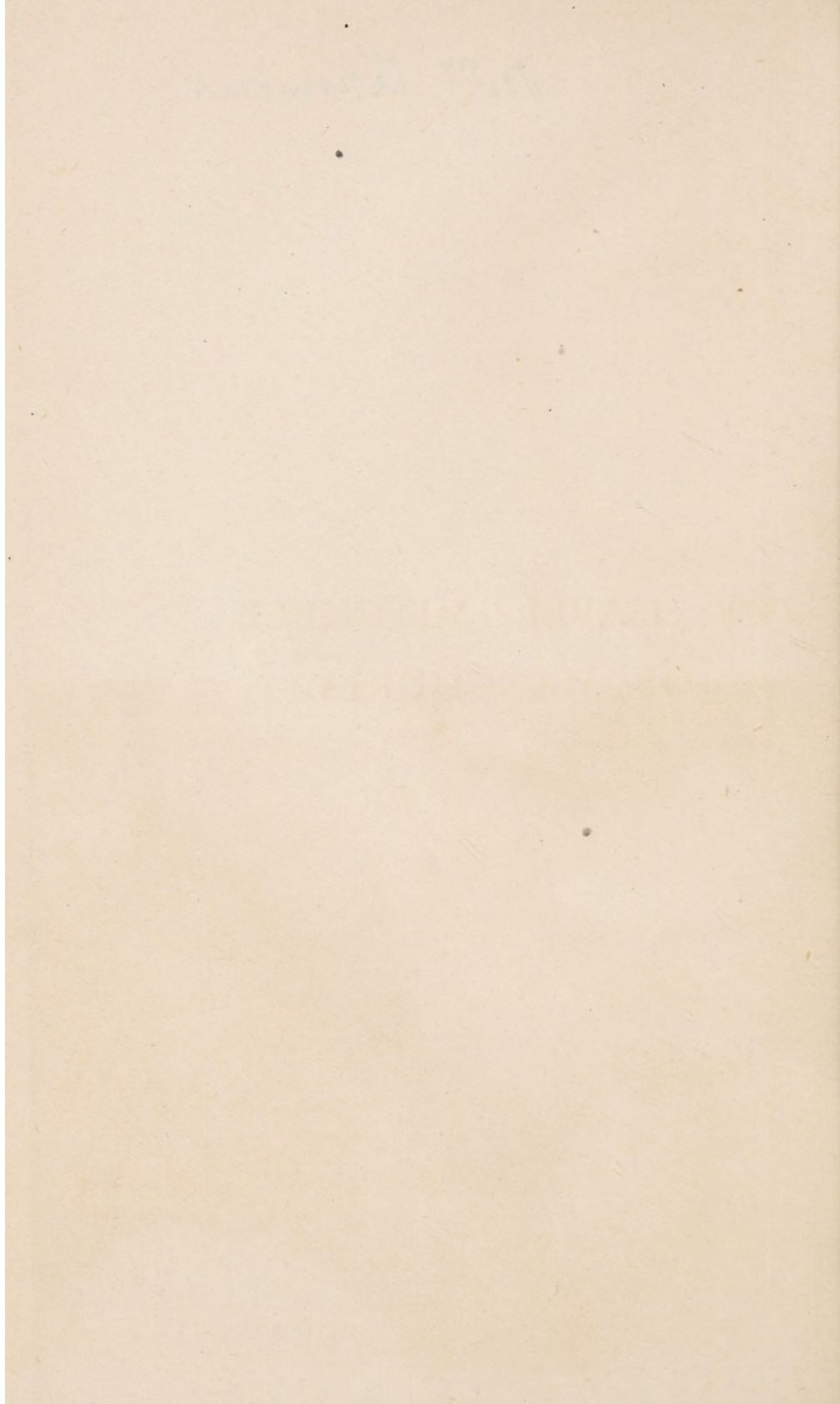
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DR. ISABEL MITCHELL  
OF MANCHURIA



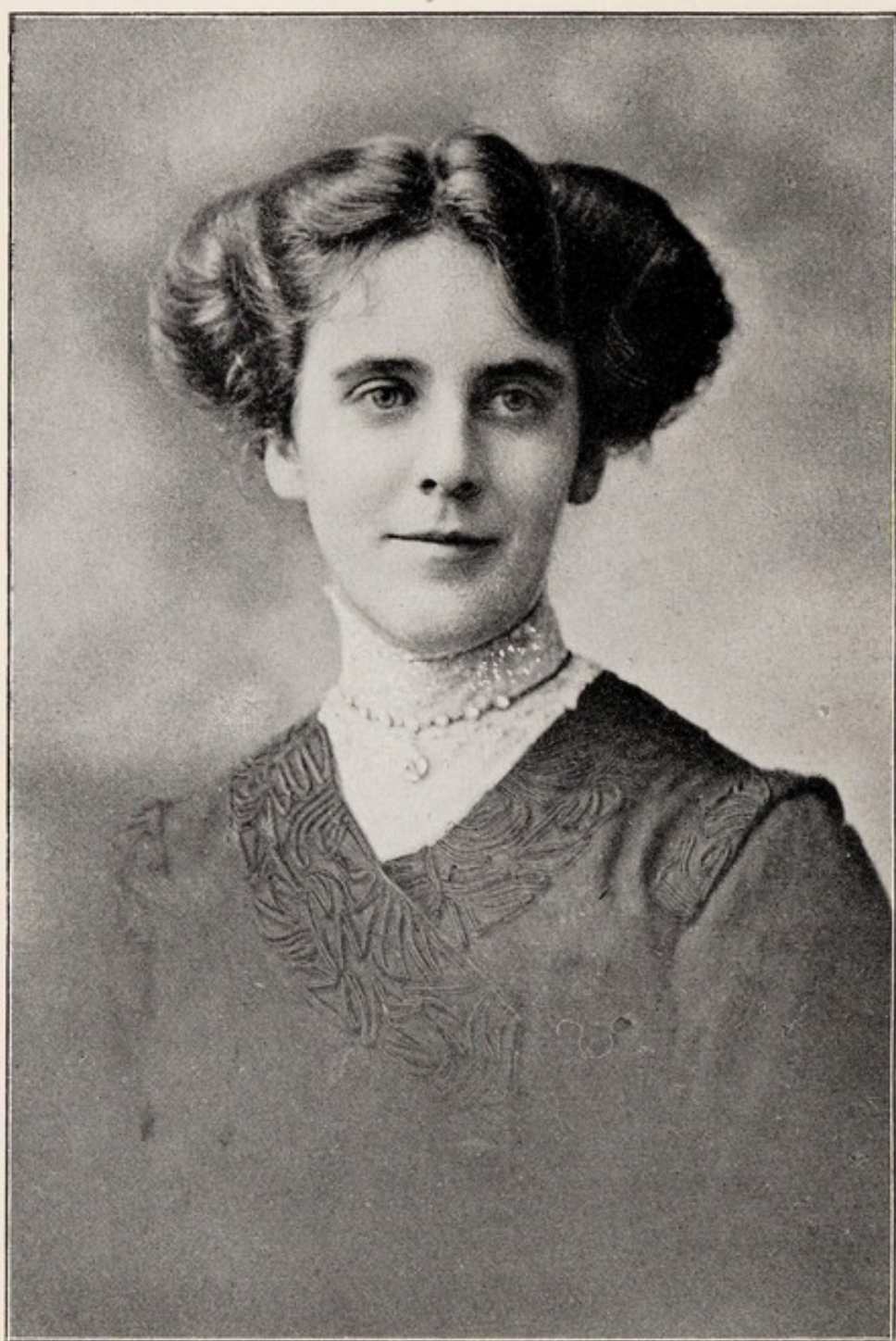
THE (SARRE) MITCHELL  
OF MANCHESTER



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ISABEL DEANE MITCHELL. M.B.

# DR. ISABEL MITCHELL OF MANCHURIA

EDITED BY THE  
REV. F. W. S. O'NEILL, M.A.

WITH A PREFACE BY THE  
RIGHT REV. JOHN IRWIN, M.A., D.D.

MODERATOR OF THE IRISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

*With Nine Illustrations and a Map*

LONDON  
JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14 FLEET STREET, E.C.

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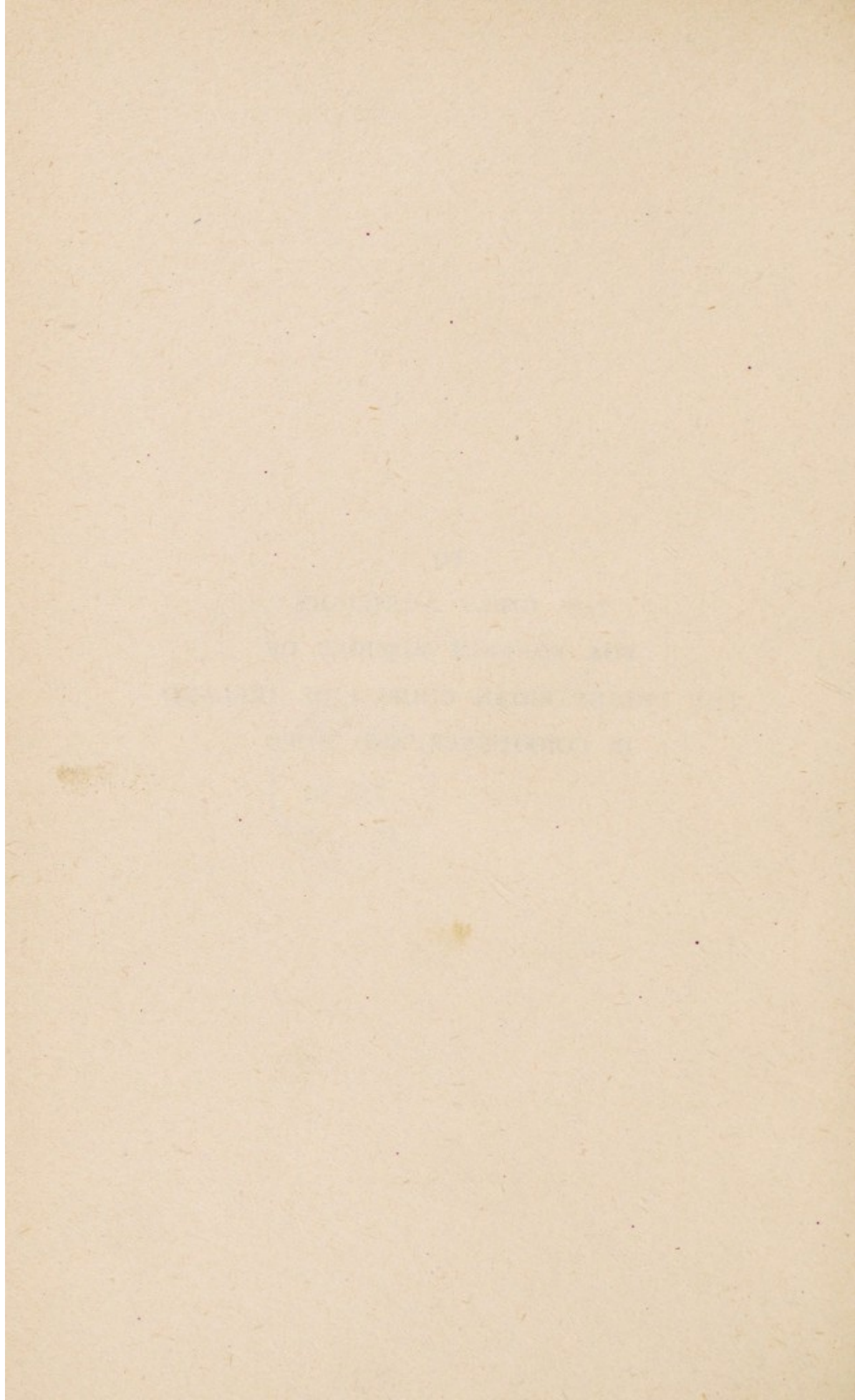


BZP (Mitchell) (2)



TO  
THE GIRLS' AUXILIARY  
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS OF  
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND  
IN CONFIDENCE AND HOPE





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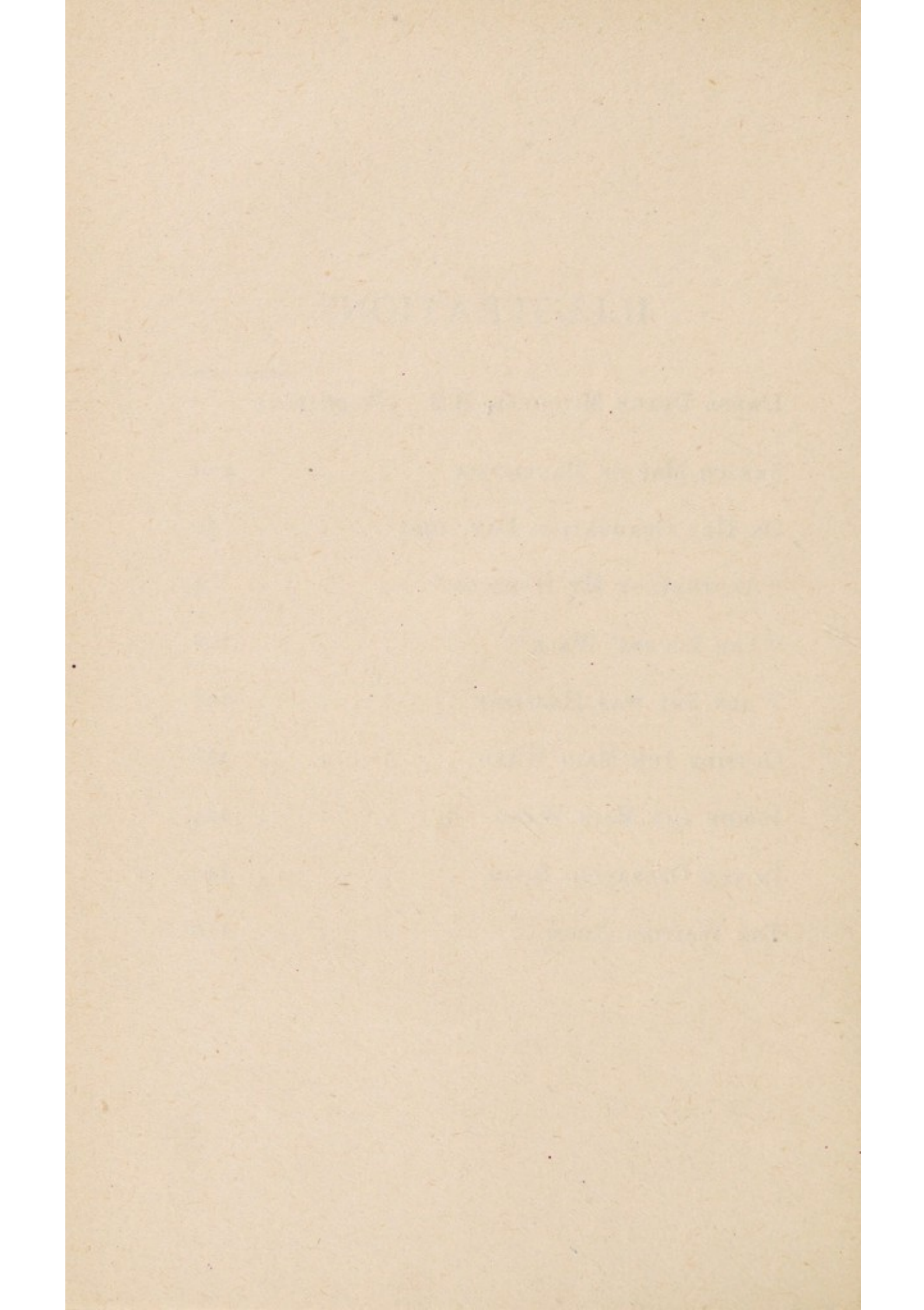
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## PREFACE

“ So many precious lives wasted ! ” We often hear these words to-day, when men are talking about the ravages of war. So many of the very flower of our youth cut down at the beginning of their career, when they were full of life and energy and hope,—the waste indeed seems terrible. But some of them have left on record their own feelings in view of the responsibility of death on the battlefield ; and no such thought seems to have occurred to them. As one of them wrote, “ There would be nothing to regret, for I could not have done otherwise than I did, and I think I could not have done better.” Their King and country had called for them. It was clearly their duty to go. The cause was worth living and dying for, for the result was in the hands of God.

It is sad to see our young ones cut down just when they are beginning to realise their powers. But we remember the grandest Life ever lived on earth was a short one, and that Christ’s working days were very few. He died before He seemed to have effected anything ; and yet to-day that brief ministry and that early death are the great inheritance of the Church and the hope of mankind.



## PREFACE

Dr. Isabel Mitchell's was a noble and devoted life. She had many gifts, and she consecrated them all to her Lord. She had reached her proper sphere of work, and, notwithstanding its many difficulties, she found perpetual delight in it. She had won the confidence of the Chinese Church and the affection of all her fellow-workers. Every one who watched her in the Field, or heard her wonderful addresses at home, predicted a great future for her. Then came a few brief days of suffering borne so patiently, and all was over. But to-day she is engaged in higher, grander service somewhere in the light of her Master's presence ; while in China and at home the influence of her happy, busy, unselfish life will not soon pass away.

It is most fitting that there should be some permanent record of a life like hers, partly as a testimony to the power of God's grace, and partly as a stimulus to others. The preparation of this work has been, I know, a labour of love to those who undertook it ; and if the reading of it should lead some young women of Dr. Mitchell's type to devote themselves to the work she loved so well, they will feel their labour not to have been in vain.

JOHN IRWIN.

WINDSOR MANSE,  
BELFAST.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

THE justification of this little book is in the quality of the material which Dr. Mitchell left behind. That and her own personality have impelled her friends to issue a brief biography, chiefly composed of her private letters to her mother and her sister, Mrs. Entrican. These letters, it should be remembered, were not intended for publication. They are all the more revealing and intimate on that account. They tell, as no other narrative could do, the story of her eleven and a half years of pioneer service, by which from small beginnings she built up a great Mission Hospital.

Owing to the kindness of others, the Editor's task has been a simple one. From Dr. Mitchell's correspondence extracts have been selected so as to cover her missionary career, 1905—1917. These, with some additional matter, make up the larger part of the book,



## EDITOR'S NOTE

viz., Chapters II. to VIII. The concluding chapter contains a few of Dr. Mitchell's occasional sketches in prose and verse. The lines, initialled "I. D. M.," at the beginning of most of the chapters, are fragments taken from her lyrics.

The Editor wishes to express his warmest thanks to Miss May S. M'Kerrow for her invaluable help. He is also deeply indebted to Miss Helen Waddell, M.A., for the guidance of her trained judgment all through the preparation. Among others whose assistance was readily given, thanks are due for the Preface to the Right Reverend Dr. Irwin, Moderator of Assembly and Convener of the Foreign Mission ; to Mr. Lao, secretary of the Chinese Legation, London, for the Chinese inscription on the cover ; to the Rev. George Thompson, D.D., co-Convener of the Foreign Mission, for reading and commenting on the MS. ; and to the Rev. A. Herbert Gray, M.A., for his contribution, without which the volume would have been much the poorer.

The reader will not have gone far in the account of our friend's life before there is discovered the influence of another personality besides Dr. Mitchell's own. It is from the



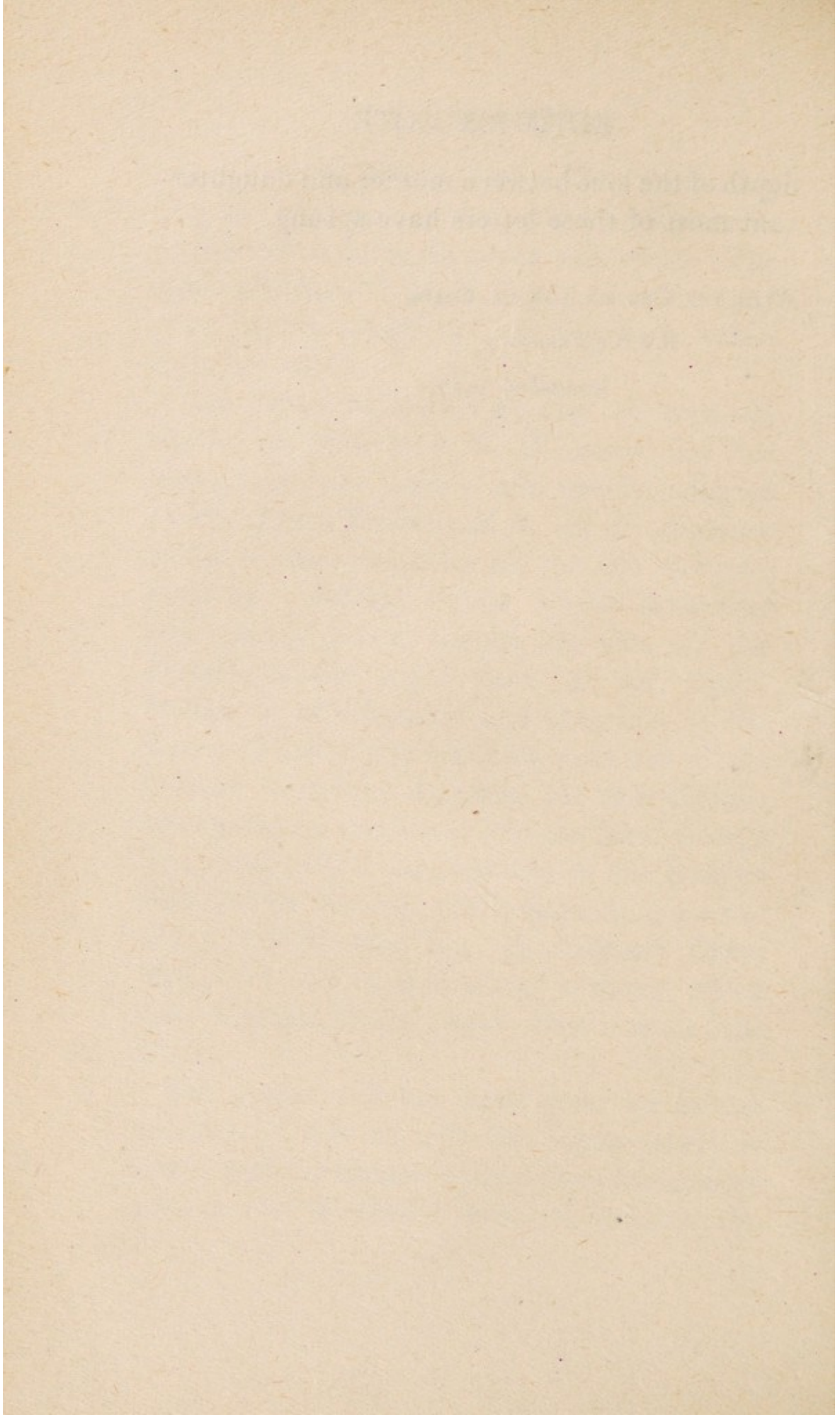
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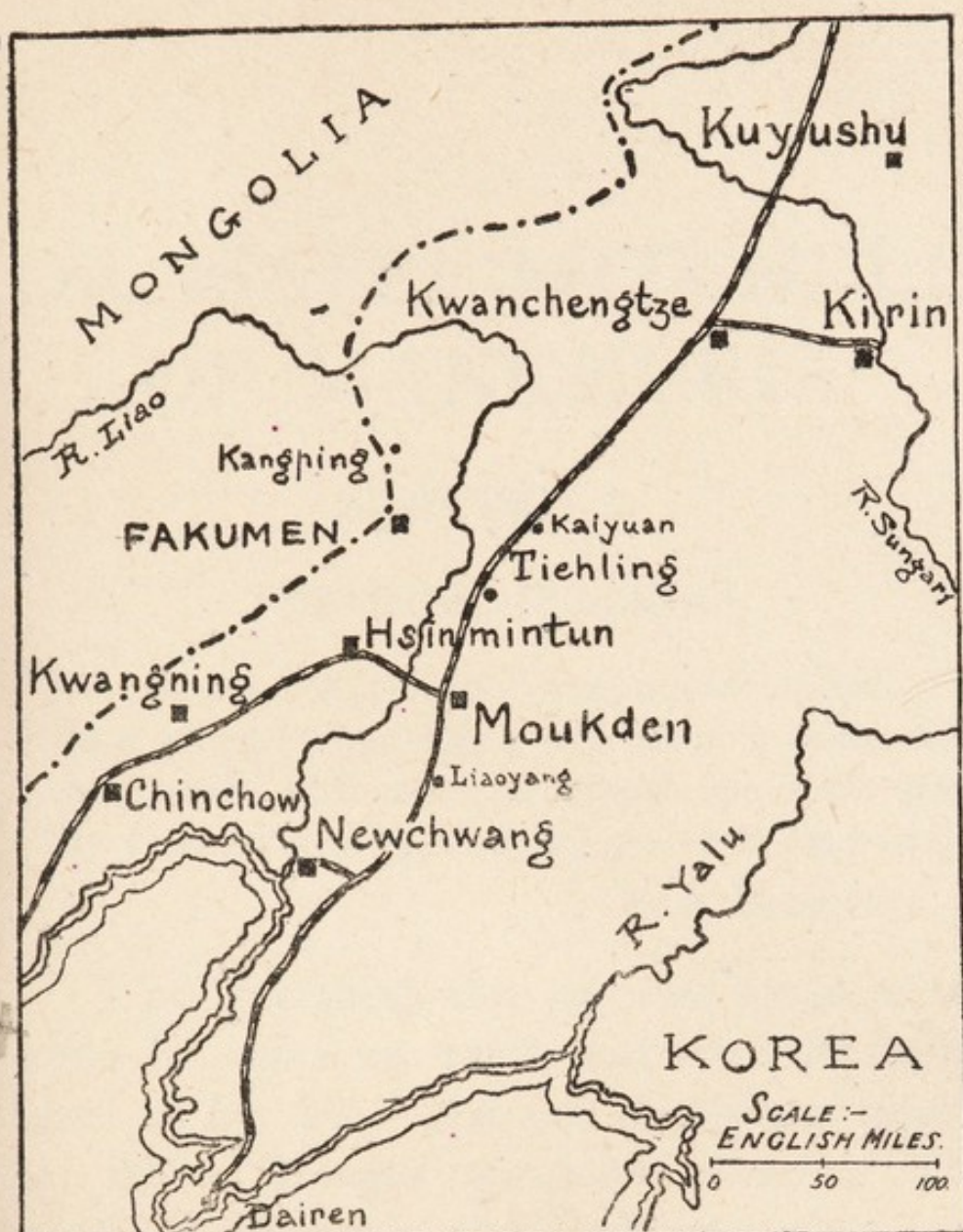
depth of the love between mother and daughter  
that most of these letters have sprung.

WITH THE CHINESE LABOUR CORPS,  
B.E.F., FRANCE.

*November, 1917.*







SKETCH MAP OF MANCHURIA

The places marked on the map are the stations of the Irish Mission, besides a few other towns referred to in Dr. Mitchell's letters. Mission work in Manchuria is conducted by the United Free Church of Scotland, the Danish Lutheran Church, and the Irish Presbyterian Church, as well as by the Paris Society of the Roman Church.

Fakumen, a busy market-town, with a population of 30,000, is on the old Mongolian border. The nearest railway station is Tieling, 30 miles distant, on the South Manchuria Railway.

In the Mission District of Fakumen, which is 5,000 square miles in extent, and has a population of about half a million, there are 1,300 Chinese Christians.





# DR. ISABEL MITCHELL OF MANCHURIA

## CHAPTER I

### THE HIGH CALLING <sup>1</sup>

“She never found fault with you, never implied  
Your wrong by her right ; and yet men at her side  
Grew nobler, girls purer, as through the whole town  
The children were gladder that pulled at her gown.”

E. B. BROWNING.

“I do not think that any one amongst us could be quite so much and so universally loved as Dr. Ida. She had a radiance about her which brought sunshine wherever she went,—a quietness and confidence that imparted strength. In Fakumen, she will always live on, an influence and spirit like hers can never die.” So wrote one of the leaders <sup>2</sup> of the Mission in Manchuria, when in March, 1917, Isabel Deane Mitchell passed straight from her work in Fakumen to the joy of service in the presence of her Master.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is by Miss M. S. M'Kerrow.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. G. Douglas, M.A., U. F. Church of Scotland Mission, Liäoyang.



## DR. ISABEL MITCHELL

It was the same wonderful personality which attracted to her at college students of widely different types, who counted her friendship one of the big things gained in those undergraduate days.

The place she filled in her home—who can express what that was? This is certain, she was singularly blessed in her home, and she knew it.

She was born in Belfast in 1879, the daughter of a busy manse and a busy parish. Her father had built up Crumlin Road Church from a small beginning in a Mission Hall. Belfast has few more faithful ministers than the Rev. D. K. Mitchell. Her mother—an ideal mother to her family; an ideal minister's wife in a congregation which required much time and thought and energy; with a heart world-wide in its sympathies, and a love that grudged nothing, even to being glad to offer three of her children to the missionary cause—was it any wonder that the daughter loved her with a devotion that influenced all her life?

During infancy and childhood, Isabel, or Ida as she was called at home, was far from robust. Some, indeed, seeing her pale complexion and “bright and shining grey eyes,”



## THE HIGH CALLING

thought that she would never grow up ; but she went scathless through childhood, seemingly charmed against infection. Until the medical examination which passed her for foreign service, she had never, she used to boast, " shown her tongue to a doctor."

By the time she was four years of age she had taught herself to read, spelling out, with a playbox of letters, the words of a favourite picture-book.

On her fifth birthday she had the great joy of the gift of a Baby Brother. From the first moment she saw him, she mothered him ; and no sister ever more constantly cared for a brother than she for " my own little boy." They were the youngest of a family of five, and inseparable for many years.

At school she was thoughtful and a hard worker ; whilst her love of fun and her self-forgetfulness made her a general favourite.

Almost it seems as though her life-work were inevitable. It was a missionary home and a missionary church. As a girl at home, and in Sunday School, under " the best of teachers," her vivid imagination revelled in pictures of boys and girls of other lands : she was thrilled by the stories of the great missionary pioneers. Then, as her education



## DR. ISABEL MITCHELL

broadened and deepened, and very specially as she came to know more of Christ, she began to realise something of what it must mean to live in a non-Christian land. Missionary service became to her simply the natural expression of the Christian life, for a great world family which is one. The measure of her love for her Lord was the measure of her desire to serve, and she longed to give her life where it might count the most.

“Francis of Assisi, kneeling before the crucifix, saw the Crucified and at the same time heard the weary call of many lands. Carey saw Him—and India; Morrison saw Him—and China; Livingstone saw Him—and Africa.”

“Twice,” wrote one who was with her in Manchester the winter before her designation, “I saw her face lit with radiance that was nothing but divine; once at her last service in Grosvenor Square. It happened to be Communion and we were singing :

‘Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were an offering far too small;  
Love so amazing, so Divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.’

She was standing where I could see her face and it was transfigured.”



## THE HIGH CALLING

It was in 1897—she was on the eve of entering the University—that her choice was made to study Medicine. She was strongly attracted to literature; the creative restiveness was in her, and she would have entered eagerly upon an Arts course. But she heard Dr. and Mrs. Greig, of Kirin, Manchuria, speak at a missionary meeting, and after a long talk with Mrs. Greig, she came to her mother with a very grave face, saying that Mrs. Greig had convinced her that the crying need of China was for women doctors, and had begged her to take a medical course and fit herself for the work. “But how could *I* ever be a doctor?”

It was a harder thing for a girl to face twenty years ago than now, specially for one of her temperament. But if at first her spirit failed before it, she was not daunted. There was no question of her ability; her schooldays had proved that. There remained finance; a Medical was far more expensive than an Arts course; yet she believed that, if it were God’s will to send her to Manchuria as a doctor, the money would come from somewhere. She offered herself to the Women’s Missionary Society and was told that if she succeeded in obtaining a



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medical degree, they would gladly consider her application.

That summer she was in Keswick, staying at the house of some friends. There her resolution came to the ears of one who was amazed at her choice of a career, but who, in a very genuine admiration, guaranteed the expenses of the first medical year. It was arranged that she should study in Queen Margaret College, Glasgow, which was affiliated with the University, and she went into residence in Queen Margaret Hall, in October, 1897.

Among the young people of her father's church there was great enthusiasm when it was known that one of their number hoped to go to China. Already they had a representative in Africa; now they determined to have a share in the preparation of their second missionary, and, at the cost of great self-denial, they helped materially to the end of her course of studies, relieving her from all financial anxiety.

From 1897 till 1903, she studied at Queen Margaret College. They were good years. She had not gone to college with a love for medicine, but with a determination to give of her best in preparation for the work which had



## THE HIGH CALLING

claimed her life. It was not long before she became interested. The scientific aspect of her studies she enjoyed, and the humanitarian side never failed to appeal to her. But the revelations and horrors of disease, the sin and sorrow and suffering entailed, were a real and constant trial to her. "Thank God, she was one," writes a college friend, "who never could forget the patient in the disease ; but it made her suffer. Yet only those who knew her well ever suspected how much it cost, for with that putting aside of herself, which was so characteristic of her, she would go about her work bright and interested, sparing no pains to perfect herself in it."

She was of an amazing humility ; but one thing she could not bear, and that was failure. Her college record tells of four medals and two prizes ; but the most illuminating item in it is a failure against her name in her first year's examination in Chemistry—unknown territory to her until then—and, on the heels of it, a first place among men and women in the same subject in the autumn examination of that year.

[She was shy, with that peculiarly Irish shyness that melts from preternatural gravity



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with strangers to most "gracious fooling" once they are elect, and the plunge into a residential college must have been a little terrifying. But there was something very disarming in that timidity. Her diffidence never dared advances. She could never, she said herself, "make friends"; they had to find her out, or, as she put it, they were "sent" to her. Some of them at Queen Margaret put it differently; it was she who was sent, and some first found themselves when they found her.

"Ida had a rare personality," writes one of these friends. "My friendship with her is bound up with the most sacred things of life. She was immeasurably above me, but I remember occasions when we plumbed the depths of depression over our shortcomings together. Withal she possessed the rare gift of making laughter. One picture of her in my room on the eve of a home-going rises vividly before me—she kept us rocking with laughter. . . . Her gaiety of spirit was certainly one of her charms at college."

"She had many friends," another writes, "as wherever she went her bright and friendly manner, her sincerity and her keen Irish



## THE HIGH CALLING

humour, her goodness, in the big, broad sense of the word, attracted people to her. Ida was deeply religious ; but there was nothing narrow in her profession of it. Religion was her life ; it was part of herself, and so intimate and sacred a thing as only to be talked of in quiet and sacred moments. She was a member of a Bible Study Circle and took an active part in the religious life of the college. Looking back, I do not think there was any girl in college in my day so really good as Ida. There were many, indeed, who made more outward profession of it. It was never so with Ida. Hers was a practical religion ; she lived it and rarely spoke it. And she had a broad and tolerant charity for the views and beliefs of others.

“ She was a lover of all things beautiful ; indeed, it was more than a love ; it was an intense realisation of the beautiful. Beauty in nature, art, poetry and music all appealed to her. She was a poet in a very real sense. And yet, what a child she was ! I always remember Ida when the holidays came within reasonable distance. Her spirits would go up by leaps and bounds. We used to tell her she was mad those days.”

Her holidays were spent in Ireland and



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were eagerly looked forward to by her family. She took a special interest in her young brother's studies. He had told her that he hoped to follow her example and become a medical missionary.

In the summer of 1902 they had planned to work together at the sea. She was to coach him for a second year's scholarship at Queen's College, Belfast. The boy was 18 then. He had gone with his father for a cycling tour in the County Derry Hills, and they were expected back on September 3rd. The evening before, his sister had gone out to the rocks to watch the sunset and stayed there a long time alone. The glory of it broke that night in a storm of wind and rain. Word came next day that the boy had spent the night in a country manse, and had gone out next morning to bathe when the river came down in spate. They found his body three days after.

They had been inseparable. What that loss meant to her can be imagined. Almost stunned with grief herself, she, yet, we are told, was "a tower of strength," in the family sorrow.

One day, just before returning to College, she went up to her brother's little study, and



## THE HIGH CALLING

on the inside of an old envelope, she wrote the following lines :—

Sunlight on garnered corn fields  
And golden sheaves piled high,  
White clouds are gently wafted  
Over the Autumn sky.

Farewell ! oh, gentle Summer,  
With the sunshine and the sea ;  
Our brightest joy and sweetest  
Thou hast borne away with thee.

For us—the Winter cometh  
With its wind and with its rain,  
And work that leads us onward  
Through the narrow paths of pain.

For him—the joys of Heaven,  
The brightness of God's face,  
And service pure and sinless  
Within the Holy Place.

For all of us—a memory,  
And a hope that leads above  
Of everlasting Summer  
In the sunshine of God's love.

It took some courage to return to study that autumn ; but she held on bravely, and in July of the following year, 1903, she was



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capped by Principal Storey, taking the degree of M.B., Ch.B., of Glasgow University.

In a letter to her sister, the next day, she writes: "I had no idea it was so nice to be capped. I nearly shouted for joy, when I was called up. Wasn't it ridiculous? and yet I couldn't help it." Then she tells of the comedy of "taking the oath" not to kill anybody—in the Examination Hall, of all places! And the good-byes in the cloisters afterwards. "I never had so many handshakes and good wishes in my life, but I was sorry to say good-bye to so many of the girls and the men too, for we have all spent five of the happiest years of our lives together. Exams. and other horrors were all forgotten yesterday."

She was ready for China, but war had broken out between Russia and Japan, and Manchuria's unlucky position between the contending powers made travelling impossible. Meantime she was appointed House-Surgeon in Chorlton-on-Medlock Dispensary, Manchester.

Two things Manchester gave her, besides experience in her work that was invaluable in after days,—a vision of the tribulation of a great manufacturing town, and the ministry and friendship of Rev. A. Herbert Gray.<sup>1</sup>

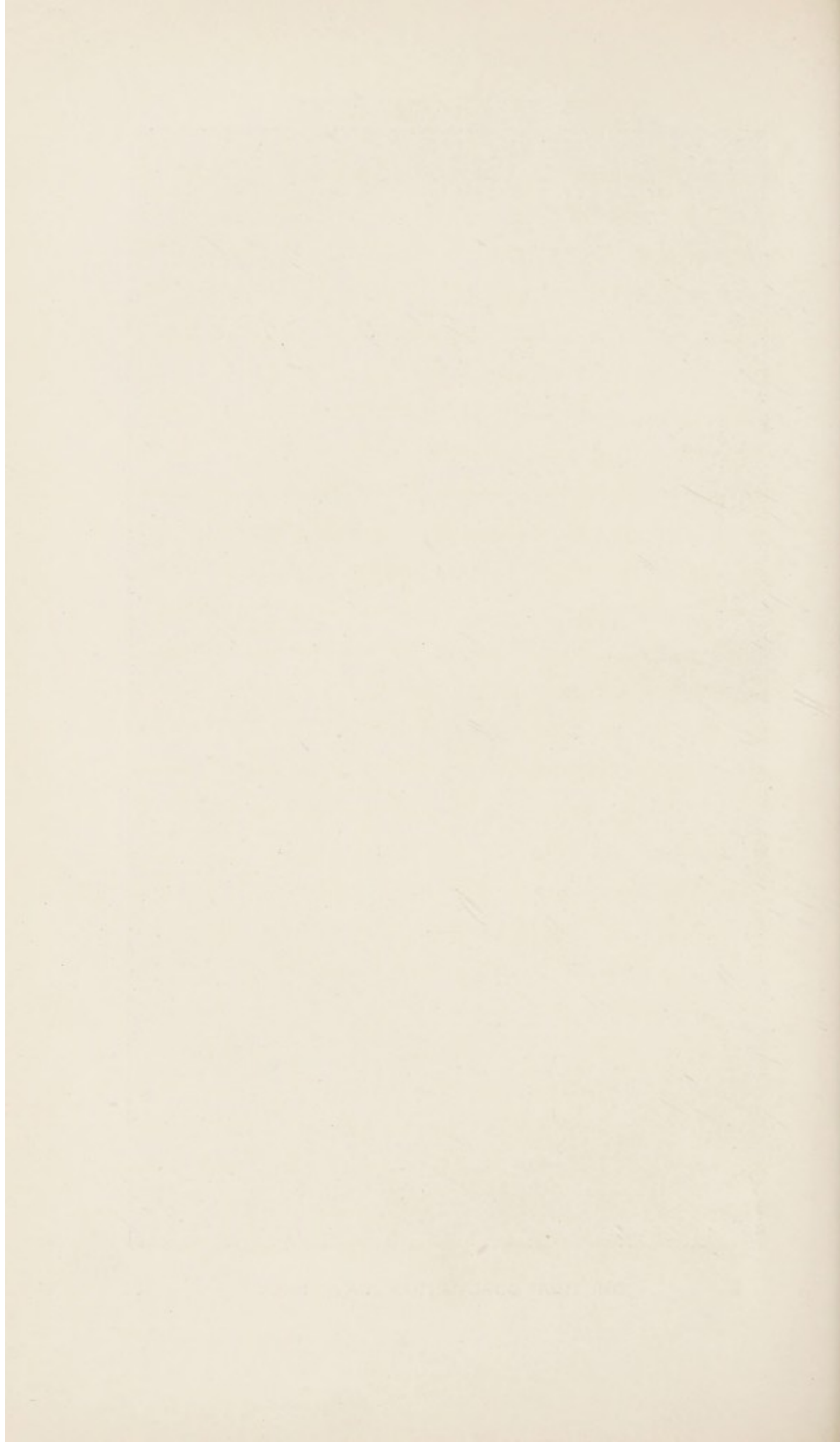
<sup>1</sup> Now of Glasgow. His tribute to Dr. Mitchell appears on a later page.





ON HER GRADUATION DAY, 1903.







## THE HIGH CALLING

She found time to teach in his Sunday School and to help in the Girls' Club, with some of whose members she corresponded regularly during all her years in China. The City of God lieth foursquare ; and it was not the least part of her training to watch the building of these other gates than those that face the East.

"In my medical visits," she wrote, "I used often to while away the thoughts of a patient from a painful dressing or a tedious visit by telling them of the women who had no doctors at all, and no medical help and no comfort in their sorrow. They were always so interested, and many a little souvenir I am taking with me, from the very poorest, always given with the request that I would take it to China with me. They did not wonder that I wanted to go."

In October, 1905, the way was open for her to sail to China. Speaking at a farewell meeting in Belfast, she closed her address with these words :—

"I feel you are doing me an honour of which I am utterly unworthy. I can only thank you from the depths of my heart, and say I will do my best to fulfil the trust you have put in me. You will bear with me if I make many mistakes at first, if I am long in



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learning the language, if I blunder and stumble. You will know that I am trying, and you will ask for me that I may have courage and patience and love. For, sometimes, I almost shrink from it all, and my heart fails me, but it was in the Irish Presbyterian Church that I learned the words 'Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not dismayed ; for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.' It was in that Church that I learned to know and love Christ, and, in going out, it is my own earnest prayer that God in His great goodness may use even such an unworthy instrument to help in some small measure in His great plan for the Evangelisation of the World."



## CHAPTER II

### WITH WONDER WIDE

1905

“The old year lies a-dying,  
And ever and anon its bosom seems to heave  
With the last quivering memory of a long-loved home  
That it was hard to leave.

“The evening shadows lengthened,  
And growing old, you looked with wonder wide  
Upon the strange land and the stranger faces  
That lay beyond the tide.”

From the poem “1905,” by I. D. M.

“THE MEDITERRANEAN,

“*September, 1905.*

“OH! my people, you may envy me!  
Such a scene around me as I write. Illimit-  
able blue. Sea and sky as far as eye can  
reach! It is beautiful beyond all powers of  
description. We passed close to the rugged  
coasts of Spain yesterday. The sand-coloured  
cliffs come sheer down into the blue sea. This



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morning the reveillé sounded at 4.45, and I was up and dressed in a twinkling. I went right up to the bridge. The East was growing red with morning, and there, there, in the clear sweet morning air were the rugged peaks of Africa on our right, the Spanish coast on our left, and right in front, the great Rock of Gibraltar. I simply could not speak."

### " GENOA.

" I woke with the first streak of red, with the last star hanging low in the sky, and looked out. In a little while the mountains appeared—the mountains of Italy. I leaped from my bunk and wakened my sleepers. We were on deck, the top deck, in no time. Oh ! Gibraltar was fine, but nothing could ever be like that first morning light over the hills, and the houses of Genoa lying in mist at the foot. The sun rose as we drew nearer and flooded all the harbour with light, and for two hours we stood entranced."

### " SUEZ CANAL.

" We are creeping slowly along with banks close on each side of us. On Africa's side there is nothing but golden strands as far as one can see. No house, no tree, no shrub



## WITH WONDER WIDE

even, or blade of grass. How dreadful the desert is ! On the other side there are some trees with a broad pathway along which we passed a great string of camels. We went into Port Said early this morning and went on shore. It was my first peep of the real East. Somehow the whole place struck me as most repulsive. Genoa was beautiful, and Naples was dirty, but Port Said is wicked, wicked, wicked. I never felt it before. It made me feel I wanted to go and fight, I do not know what, but fight that awful visible evil. I never felt so filled with hate before. It was almost as if one could see the smiling, triumphant face of Satan behind it all. Perhaps you think it is extravagant, and that I am getting some of the exaggeration of the East, but it is not so. You would feel it all if you were here."

" COLOMBO.

" The mail came in this morning. It was like a drink of cold water to a very thirsty soul. We landed at Colombo into a broad busy street with beautiful buildings all along, and felt a touch of home on coming on good Queen Victoria, larger than life, at the first corner. We left the city and went out along a straight terra-cotta road. We drove about



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five miles to Mount Lavinia. I wish I could describe that road. One of our people said it was like a great cinematograph exhibition all the way, and such, indeed, it was."

" SINGAPORE.

" We have had a quiet Sunday, and peaceful, for we had heavy rain to-day, the first I have seen since I left home. We had a particularly nice service by Dr. Willis, of the London Missionary Society. He told us about his Hospital work in Hankow, and made me feel again the grandeur of the work to which I am going. Sometimes in these dark days I have lost sight a little of the privilege and the joy, but I have been helped to-day, and surely, surely, it is wonderful work, if only I shall be able to do it.

" This morning we had a little Communion Service. My heart turned back home. You all seemed far away and yet near. The ship's plate and tumbler were all we had to hold our bread and wine, but surely the Lord was near, and the words rang out, 'Till He come.' It will be a wonderful day, will it not, when we all meet for the great Marriage Supper, and the partings are all over for evermore ? "



## WITH WONDER WIDE

“SHANGHAI, *October* 14, 1905.

“My first day in China. I could weep, but not with sorrow, for my heart is filled with a deep, deep joy. I have reached the land at last, ‘the haven where I would be.’ It is wonderful, isn’t it? All the way has been opened so quietly, and so surely, all the years. Seven years to-night since the C.E. Meeting in our schoolroom, when the dear Endeavourers presented me with my beautiful Bible. Seven years! and to-night I am in China. My heart is almost too full to write. I seem to hear the voice that is sweeter to me than anything on earth, saying, ‘Yes, He never fails.’ Never fails, and we can trust Him with each other until we meet again and our lonely hearts rejoice.

“I am already becoming fascinated by the Chinese. We had our first glimpse of them at Colombo. Then in Penang we went through a great part of the native streets, and two of us sat for half an hour in a Buddhist temple watching the stream of worshippers. I think that impressed me more than all the books I have ever read about them. It is very different seeing them in all their sordid reality.

“Hongkong was still more Chinese. I think



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what has impressed me most is the illimitable number there seems to be of Chinese coolies. I noticed it in Hongkong, and even more here. The streets are crowded with them, in rickshas, and carrying all manner of loads; and the side-walks too are crowded with Chinese. The individual seems almost lost in the innumerable crowd."

" BETWEEN SHANGHAI AND NEWCHWANG.

"I can hardly say we are going to Newchwang, for at present we are anchored. We have to anchor when it grows dark every night for fear of the floating mines—2,500 of them lie in these waters."

" *November, 1905.*

"We arrived in Hsinmintun and found Mr. Omelvena<sup>1</sup> and Mr. O'Neill awaiting Miss M'Williams<sup>2</sup> and me. We had a very happy visit there. We left for Fakumen in two little Chinese carts, but unfortunately the one in which I was seated, in turning a sharp corner, completely overturned. One of the mules was down too, and I and all my rugs and packing were in a heap in the dusty road.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. John Omelvena, B.A., of Hsinmintun.

<sup>2</sup> The Irish Mission staff in Fakumen consisted of Miss Sara M'Williams, Dr. Mitchell and Rev. F. W. S. and Mrs. O'Neill.



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I crawled out and was not in the least hurt. We soon were clear of the town. Mr. O'Neill said we were then on the main road, but there was absolutely no road, only deep cart ruts through the ploughed fields. We halted at four o'clock for the night in a Chinese inn. The inn was comparatively new, and we were fortunate in having a room to ourselves. It was just like a barn. A big dark place with an uneven mud floor and one end piled with millet stalks. We were very ready for our supper. Then we boiled a little spirit kettle and had good tea out of my little cups. The tea basket has been greatly in demand. The Boy roused us at 2.15 a.m. to say the carts were ready. We travelled many hours before it was light, but at last the dawn came, when we had mounted up among the hills. It was very lonely and very beautiful in the soft light, and Mr. O'Neill's pony looked so tempting that I mounted and had a long ride. Then I invited Miss Mac into my cart and I sat on the shaft where the Boy had been, and went jolting away and away down the hills. We forded many icy rivers, and went up and down many banks. We saw a great string of beautiful camels who passed us quite close. I counted 164; they were all laden with poles



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and wooden bowls and queer Chinese things. At ten o'clock we stopped for dinner at a little village where there is a Mission Chapel. The place is crowded with Japanese soldiers who came all round us. We went into a member's house and right through into the women's room, but they still crowded after us. They become very angry if they are made go away, so we went visiting other Christians in their little homes, and finally were able to take our meal in comparative peace. The Christian families were very interesting, but I am still as one deaf and dumb. When shall I understand, and when shall I speak ? ”

“ FAKUMEN, *November 12, 1905.*

“ Home at last ! at least for a time, and, oh, what a welcome Miss M'Williams and I had from Mrs. O'Neill, and how glad we are to think that our weary, watery and dusty wanderings are over ! Can you believe that we are really here ? There is a man going South to-morrow early, and it is a chance to send a letter. I feel I am late with all my Christmas letters, but how can one write Christmas greetings in November ?

“ We are a very happy little family all here



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together. After supper we four have English prayers together, and we never forget our dear ones far away. Sometimes you do seem very far away, but often you seem quite near. I have begun Chinese. I did not want to lose time. I have a very stately old teacher who can't speak a word of English, so we have a funny time. I am going over my tone exercises with him, and we sit and mew and mao at each other for hours and hours until I cannot keep my face straight any longer and just laugh. He has to draw little pictures to show me where to put my tongue, the sounds are so very strange.

"We went for a long walk yesterday, and did not realise how cold it was until we turned home. We had to face the most biting wind I ever felt in my life. I turned up the collar of my sealskin over my ears and nose and mouth, but even then I thought my forehead would freeze. I felt just as if a block of ice were pressed close against it, and this for half an hour makes one realise what cold is.

"I have been to Chinese Church for the first time. The Church is a big room with a low roof with white paper on the walls and blue paper on the ceiling. There were one hundred



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men and thirty or forty women. Some of the men dozed behind their big spectacles, and some of the boys looked about them, but some sat so reverently and never took their eyes off the preacher's face. It was splendid to see them. At the end Mr. O'Neill told them the new Doctor had come from the Western Kingdom, and asked them to salute me, so all the congregation stood and gave me a most majestic bow. I could only clasp my hands and bow to them gravely in return. One of the Elders in his prayer thanked the Lord that they had seen my face! The Elder gave me a real handshake when he came up to welcome me. My heart felt very big and shaky."

*" Later.*

" We have had an eventful day, as I have been at a feast. There was a large gathering in one of the Christians' houses, over the drawing up of a new lease, and we were all invited to 'take food.' The people sent for us at 2.30. It was a curious scene. The room with its kang<sup>1</sup> on each side, was filled with a

<sup>1</sup> The kang, on which the people of North China eat and sleep, is a brick platform with horizontal flues underneath, through which the smoke of the cooking fire is conveyed. Without this simple device, the extreme cold of winter would be unbearable in Chinese homes.



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crowd of men, and the women quickly followed us in. The centre of attraction was my teacher, Mr. Jang, seated on a kang and writing the lease in huge characters on enormous sheets of paper. The men were all most anxious to see that everything was done decently and in order. There was a long coil, like a grass rope, hanging from the ceiling. This was burning at one end, and at it all the old ladies and the men, both young and old, lighted their pipes.

“We paid our respects to every one, and were then taken into another filthy room where our food was to be served. We saw it in preparation as we passed through the kitchen, where a grimy old man was putting more millet stalk into the brick fire under a big black pot.

“In this room there sat a poor young woman whom they requested me to see. She was a dreadful sight, many sores all over, each carefully covered with a Chinese black plaster! She used to go to the Japanese doctor, but is not able to now. One knee is in a very bad condition, and paining her. How I longed for my Hospital!

“I sat beside the sick woman, and longed in vain to have my hands washed. But the



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room was very full—women and babies and dogs and men, all mixed up together. We women sat at one table, and the men on the opposite kang. My appetite was gone, but we had a great variety of dishes—cold meats first, saucers of sliced cold sausages and pieces of cold liver; later, hot sea-slugs and little lumps of pork, then little pastry things with sugar accompanied by fish roe rolled up in what I thought was paper, but was really bean curd in thin crackly sheets, this also with sugar. Next came eatable meat balls in fat, and bowls of rice and of soup. I was able to say a few words to the people to-day, and was surprised to be understood. I was glad when we rose to come away as I was ready for turning on the roasting kang! We sit cross-legged with a handkerchief spread on our knees.”

“ *December, 1905.*

“ In the house our little round goes on just the same day after day. It is a great temptation to take up medical work, but I am fighting against it, for I know this language will absorb all my energies and I must learn it first. Greek is no name for it! It is absolutely awful. My teacher and I are beginning to talk a little now, and I was able to tell him to-day



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that I studied medicine in Scotland for five years, and that my Mother was a 'Scotland's man,' and my Father an 'Ireland's man.' He is very pleased to know all these little things. The first chapter of John's Gospel is still a long, long way from being finished. I am coming to know the girls at the School quite well now. At first I could not tell whether they were girls or boys. They wear the same clothes, and the girls have their heads shaven, all but the round patch with the queue coming from it. I used to think some of the coolies in Shanghai surely had their pigtails stuck on, but every Chinaman has long, long hair down his back. None but the very old women wear any hats. A pair of ear muffs is all they put on when they go out, even in this weather. The carpenter's little daughter is going to make a pair for me, my ears nip so.

"We are into winter fairly. As I write, the winds are howling through the dark night and heaping the snow in great drifts at my window. It has snowed all day and the wind is very strong, and whirling it about everywhere. We went out in the afternoon with all the tin baths that we could find, and had great fun piling them high with the powdery



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snow. We are glad to have a chance of a little soft water. The water is so hard we can hardly wash our hands in it, so our pails are in process of melting all over the house. We had actually a tea party last night, two Japanese, Colonel Asano, who can say two and a half words in English, and Mr. Kodaira, who can speak a little more. They are very bright, happy little Japanese, both Christians, and we had a lively tea.

“ We went out to-day, we three girls, with old Mrs. Shu, to do some shopping for the Christmas tree. The shops have no glass windows. The counter is just at the pavement, and we stand outside to do our shopping. We purchased some white cotton gloves, which are much in fashion since the Japs came. The sight of the foreigners was too much for the Chinese, and when we turned away from our counter, we had to fight our way through a dense crowd of men and boys. One could have walked on their heads for the length of the street. We were glad to be home again. I saw my first *beautiful* Chinese woman to-day. She was in mourning, that is, all in white loose garments with white shoes and a big white towel knotted over her head. She had a



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face like a beautiful Madonna, very sad and pure and lovely.

“We had such a bright, happy service on Sunday. There were hardly seats for them all. I enjoy Church much more every time. The faces used to look so very much alike, but now I am coming to know them all, and it is an endless interest to watch them. It is splendid to see the big room quite full, and to watch them singing is a real treat.”

“*December 24, 1905.*”

“This is Christmas eve. I shall think of you all to-morrow, and the dear bright wee faces. My first Christmas away from home, but we shall be very near all the same. How I miss you! But every day I feel more and more what a wonderful thing it is that I have been allowed to come out here. The work is very great, and I am very badly fitted for it, but I shall try, and you will all help. I woke this morning feeling very happy, and wondering why, when I remembered the mail was due, and then came a big knock at my door and a pile of letters. How I counted them, and how I devoured them all! Your Christmas wishes made me weep. You are all far too good to me. I am trying hard to feel I am just in



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the happy circle this quiet Sunday afternoon. I am in my own cosy room, so warm and bright and full of sunshine, and I am very happy, and my calendar sings : ' I am nearer home to-day than ever I have been before.' ”



## CHAPTER III

### LEARNING THE SECRET

1906

“ Have you heard the padding of soft shod feet  
O'er the never-ending sand ?  
Have you heard the words so mystic and sweet  
Of the far-off Eastern land ? ”

I. D. M.

“ FAKUMEN, *March*, 1906.

“ The photographer's nice wife, Mrs. Wang, walked home with us on Sunday and was very anxious I should ‘ see her illness,’ as she had a bad cough. I told her to come any day, and I would examine her, but she would have to wait for medicine. At six o'clock yesterday just as it was growing dark, I heard a great row and in came four or five big men with the news that Mrs. Wang had swallowed a large dose of opium and they thought she was dying, and would I go ? It seems she had been dressing to come to see me, and quarrelled



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with her husband over some ornament she wanted to buy for her hair. They had a bitter quarrel, and the husband departed out of the house in anger, and the wife took opium. I found myself very destitute of drugs, but we both hurried off. It was some hours since she had taken the poison. I think that they did not want us to know, only she became so very ill. She was quite unconscious when we came in, and I splashed her head with cold water and shook her hard until she got sense enough to swallow the mustard. Then Dr. Wang appeared with a stomach pump, which I was rejoiced to see, and we soon made use of it. She came to and recognised us, but if we left her alone for a minute she was asleep, so I shook and douched her with hot and cold water till I think the people were afraid of me, but I didn't mind if I could bring her round. As soon as her pulse became a little better I put her on her feet, and I think I shall never forget Miss Mac and her marching up and down that little room together. After a little her brother took her out behind into the fresh air and would not let her close her eyes for a moment, while a small boy held a lantern and her husband stood with a face as white as a sheet and watched. We left her in the end



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quite sensible, though still very drowsy, and warned them not to let her go to sleep. It was my first opium case. I hope I shall not have many like it though they say it is quite common here. Mrs. Wang is such a nice quiet girl that I was amazed, but they do anything in a fit of anger. The pathetic bit was that as soon as she came round a little, she was very anxious to recover and did her best to keep awake, but the heavy lids would fall even when they marched her about.

“ It is a wonderful life and wonderful work. I am glad I have come, and I am not really lonely as you seem to be afraid, except sometimes, specially when my work does not seem to go on very well, and I can't understand my patients, and think that if I had stayed at home, I could at least have understood what was wrong. But then the people at home have somebody else to look after them, and there are so many here with nobody to look after them. The language is hard, and just now studying is a good deal drudgery. Yesterday was cold and we had one of our famous dust storms. Miss Mac came in with bloodshot eyes and a sore throat. It is a sight to see the clouds of yellow dust blowing in tornadoes all about. We were rejoiced this



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morning to find blue sky and sunshine again. I could hardly have believed it in one day. It felt as if buttercups and primroses should be coming out, but there will not be anything green for a month, as the surface of the ground is only beginning to thaw.

“One of our favourite walks is up to the little mounds on the hillside—the Chinese graves. It sounds rather mournful, but in reality it is quite bright. At first I thought I had never seen anything so desolate as the bare brown hills and the brown fields. Even yet I find it hard to realise that some day spring will come, and the green will burst through. I have not seen even a blade of grass yet. I think mud and blue are the colours of Manchuria. It is all mud-coloured fields, houses, and streets. The people almost without exception are dressed in blue, and over all the blue sky shines every day.

“The O’Neills’ old ‘boy’<sup>1</sup> is very good to us, but he always looks so melancholy. I like when I can make him laugh. It is very funny to see a man baking the bread and frying the

<sup>1</sup> The O’Neills had gone on furlough in February, 1906, leaving the station with only the two ladies in residence. The oversight of the district was in the competent hands of the Rev. John Omelvena.



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bacon and coming in to lay the table in a nice long blue cotton coat, with his shaven head and long pigtail and nice white stockings. I think it is a splendid idea for bachelors.

“ I have another patient this week, a dear old Bible-woman who lives in a very small house. I never was in anything like it before. It is in a corner of the field behind the Church and is just a little lean-to of mud against a mud wall. There was very little light through the paper windows, but I found my old lady on the kang. She was very ill, poor soul, and the swelled limbs and pitiful wee bound feet were a sight to behold. I sang to her for a little while. Fancy my singing ! But I can sing when I cannot talk, and my sentences will not get strung together somehow. I find it is high time I was into medical work again, for I feel the old horror at having to open an abscess. I thought I was far past that nonsense.

“ Yesterday four women from a village came in to see me. I wish you had seen them sitting in a row in the study. Miss Mac asked them had they all diseases. ‘ Oh yes, we have all diseases,’ they chorused. This made me laugh. However, I took them one by one in my old dispensary way and by dint



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of my few stock questions and any number of signs and gestures I managed to find out what was wrong. They are not Christians, though one of them had heard about Christianity. It was this woman who asked me, 'How much money?' when I gave her her medicine. I told her in the best words that I could find that I did not want any money, and then I tried to tell her that they had friends in Ireland who wanted them to know about the Great Heavenly Father who loved them all, and that was why they had sent me to see their illnesses. It was told so badly, but indeed tears came into the little woman's eyes and she gave me a great curtsey to thank me, but I told her it was not I she was to thank. I did wish I could have talked to them."

*"April, 1906.*

"The patients come and come. This time it was a cartful of 'eyes.' Men and women and little children all with their heads down to keep the sun from the poor sore eyes, and accompanied by my former patient, driving a donkey, with a bandage on one eye and the other, strange to say, much improved. The cart with three horses put up in our yard and they were a picture when I had done with



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them all,—what with white eye bandages and brown paper shades and anything I could fix up for them. I wanted to snapshot them, but I have not dared to take time for my camera lately. Though I enjoy washing and examining, it was with a heavy heart I sent them all away for I could do so little for them. I want to open an ophthalmic ward in my Hospital, that wonderful castle in the air, which is in the centre of the city of the things men mean to do.<sup>1</sup>

“Tell it not in Gath! To-morrow morning I am going to have five or six of the tiniest tots all to myself for a Sabbath School class. They come with their mothers and they know absolutely nothing, not even who Jesus is. So to-day I took one of Miss Mac’s big pictures of Christ feeding the five thousand and I told my teacher he was a little child and I would explain the picture to him. He said he could understand, so I am going to try, and if I stick, I am going to teach them the Lord’s Prayer.”

“*Later.*

“Well, I had seven small mites in a little room to ourselves. It was the School kitchen,

<sup>1</sup> See poem by I. D. M. in Chapter X.



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but that did not matter, and they stood in a circle round the picture which I pinned on the mud wall. We managed pretty well and I persuaded them to answer, but an unforeseen difficulty arose and I could not get out of it. I showed them the basket and the five little loaves and all the crowd of people, and impressed upon them that there was not enough. Then I proceeded to tell them that when Jesus gave it to them, they all ate and it was enough, so naturally they looked most mystified. Then I told them it was a miracle, but they could not understand that. One of the bigger ones knew a little and I thought perhaps she could explain it to them, so I asked if she knew what a miracle was.

“ ‘Oh yes, it is a disciple.’

“ I said, ‘No.’

“ Then she said, ‘Well, it is God’s Son.’

“ So I told them I would tell them what a miracle was next Sunday. My vocabulary was quite at an end. However, they learnt their little verse, and though it was not very brilliant, still we all enjoyed ourselves.

“ Sometimes I think as I sit and look at the quiet garden with the soft green trees and the blue sky, that this quiet place is very very nice and very good for me after all the rush of



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the busy years at College and after. I seem to have so many memories of so many places and so many happy things that I do not feel the loneliness and I go back over the happy days and enjoy them all over again, even more than I did at the time, I think.

“To-day we have had a strange experience. Mrs. Fan, whose daughter had taken ill, came for me at breakfast time. As I went out I could see from our gate that the Temple Hill was covered with people flocking to the Temple from all directions. Miss Fan told me it was a great festival, and said that no one would mind if we went. We took three of the school girls with us and went up. It was strange mingling with the streams of worshippers, but we did not attract much notice, they were all so intent on their own little affairs. We made our way up the wide stone steps among the crowd, and there were the gods. Three halls full of them, hideous red monsters, with ears and terrible, ghastly painted features, with swords and glaring eyes, all far larger than the stature of a man. I stepped just inside and stood and watched, and really, I think, if the incense had not made my eyes so sore, I would have stayed all day, it was so fascinating to look on. There was one huge



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god who had a child in each arm and several at his knee, and his pot of incense was very full all the time. This is the god the women who have no children come and pray to, to send them a son. I watched the women with their blazing incense in both hands kneel down and knock their heads on the ground before this monster. There was another favourite god just opposite me. A young woman brushed in past me, her arms full of incense, and in one hand a hideous paper doll, with a wooden head and little paper clothes on a framework of millet stalks. She made her obeisance and then set up her paper doll and set fire to it, and soon there was nothing but a little handful of black ashes on the floor. She had hardly finished when two more pressed in from the crowd, one of them an old old grandmother who held the unlit incense, and the other younger, poorly dressed, with a well-stocked basket on one arm, and in the other a huge paper doll. She counted out all her little cakes so carefully and set them in front. Then she lit her incense, the old lady helping her. On her knees, she set up the poor paper doll, with all its paper clothes so nicely made and big buttons of silver paper on its coat. It blazed up in a huge blaze and



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fell towards her, but she just caught the wooden head and pushed it back into the heap of charred remains. They told us that was the god they came to when the child at home was sick, and they burn the paper child instead of their own child as an offering to the god, that the sickness may be turned away. I had a wild desire to go back and find out who that woman was and go home with her and see if I could do her child any good. One woman did not know which god was which, and a friendly soldier with a kind old face lit her incense for her and showed her which ones she wanted. She only gave her offerings to two, and was very earnest about it. I wonder if God does not hear these prayers, even though they are offered to the hideous idols, when they do not know any better. I think surely the prayers of their hearts must be heard, but oh! it is pitiful to see them. Every day I long more and more to be able to work."

"NEWCHWANG, *June*, 1906.

"It is hard to find a quiet time or place to write all my Conference news. All the Scotch join with us. What work they all have to do! My eyes were opened as to a missionary's work. Reports and committees, and ways and



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means of carrying on a gigantic work with far too little money and far too few workers. They are very earnest and very busy, and it is a relief when some of the Irish brethren set us laughing sometimes. To see a missionary aright, you should see him here at his work. It is very, very different from the man speaking at meetings at home. The Women's Conference has been a great joy to me, especially the medical bits. Miss M'Williams and Dr. Mitchell have been appointed permanently to Fakumen! I am well content, and I went to bed feeling as though another milestone had been passed, another point of my life, and feeling so very thankful it was well settled. At last I went to sleep planning how I would have my bookcase made, in which to put all the poor friends who are still lying in their box waiting for a home."

*" Later.*

" Our Conference is over. At the closing meeting yesterday we sang, ' Behold, how good a thing it is.' We are all tired, but we have all enjoyed it, every meeting. There never was a time when every one showed a nicer spirit. Our own committee met after the Conference closed. We had a dreadful night



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over bricks and mortar. I had no idea that missionaries had to draw out a plan of their own house, and estimate for bricks and timber. We drew out a plan for our new houses so economically, that the building committee laughed at us, and told us no one would pass such a wee house. Everyone is utterly opposed to us living in a renovated Chinese house. I think they have had too much experience of sickness and bad health to allow it.

"They gave me permission to start my Dispensary in two little native rooms in the Girls' School compound. It is a gigantic work, and, fancy, I am in it, and at my own little bit! Sometimes I sit and wonder at it all, and the Chinese come and go, and the tropical sun blazes down on us and we talk of all the Eastern things with their Chinese names, and soon, so soon, we become accustomed to the new life and it ceases to be strange."

"FAKUMEN, *June*, 1906.

"Back again to the old house and the old haunts, and with such a peaceful heart, as they say here, knowing that we may settle down and be at home. It was like a real home-coming. It is nearly worth while going



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away, to have the joy of returning. Our journey was quite a new one and very interesting. It was a weird sight at the railway stations to see the coolies running about with boxes, and men with little trays of sweets and cake, each lit by two Chinese lanterns. There was a big flaming fire of wood in a brazier as a signal. The big engine came in close to us. There was no platform. We had plenty of room in the train. Miss Mac and I had a seat to ourselves, and opposite us we had a Chinese woman and a little Japanese man. The little man was my envy, because he could tuck his little limbs in so neatly and go to sleep in no space at all, while we wanted long stretches and were not very comfortable at the best. When daybreak came, we were at the beginning of the battlefields, and for an hour or more we passed through all the scenes. What a strange sight it was in the clear morning light! The houses near the stations were wrecked, only the outside walls standing. Some few had roofs still on, with great holes where the shells had hit them. We saw lines and lines of trenches, so shallow they seemed to me, but the Japs are small and it does not take much to cover a man. We saw the heaps of earth thrown up by the mines, and the



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underground roads where the little Japanese marched down to the river bed. At Moukden we said good-bye to our fellow travellers and were alone in the world again. I could not help wondering, as I watched them go, when we should see another English face. We had to leave the 'boy' to bring all the boxes on a big cart, while we and our small belongings were packed into another of my horrors, the little blue covered cart without any springs. The roads were bad, very bad, and the rivers were swollen. We crossed four or five, in which the horses were always above their knees in water. But the country was glorious. Such a change a month had made! Everything so tall and green, and all along the banks quantities of wild flowers that I had never seen. I pulled handfuls and stuck them in the mules' halters, so that we looked quite gay. Up the hills and down we went, sitting on the shaft most of the time, and singing out of pure delight. Alas! the big clouds that we had admired gathered and gathered in the afternoon, and the sky grew black, and then the great thunder rolled and the lightning flashed and down came the water spouts. We sat close. The little cart was completely covered with oil-cloth, but it soaked through all. The



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roads were like rivers after that, and I was sure we should stick in the mud, but the patient mules went on. At last the carter had to look for an inn, as Fakumen was still far away over the hills, and we saw a village come in sight. We came down the wet mud road to the river bank and forded our last flood, raising 'The Lord's my Shepherd' as we crossed, to keep our spirits up, and in thankfulness for the shelter in sight. Sunday morning we rose at four to find it still raining, but we were anxious to be off. The sun came out as we crossed the last line of hills, and there was dear old Fakumên in the sunshine. The little children saw us as we came, and the coolie was at the gate. He soon made a fire, and we were glad of our breakfast. We had a rest and went down to Church. They were all glad to see us back. Most of all they were glad of the news we brought that we were going to stay. It was very nice to see our Irish and Scottish friends in Newchwang, but there is something about coming back to these people who are so glad to see us that is beyond all.

"It has a different feeling now, this little town. I looked down its long street as I came home at sunset the other night and thought,





"ANOTHER OF MY HORRORS."

The little blue-cart beside the tall millet.







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now this is to be my home. It is a very very nice home. The hills are all so green and fresh now and the millet up a foot or more, and there are crowds of little mud houses with their smoking chimneys. I hope I shall know the insides of many of these houses soon. Isn't it great about our own house? It is going to be very small but very nice, I hope. The trouble is that wages and wood are at enormous prices and not likely to go down. I am carefully preserving all my packing cases for furniture. At present I own a bed, two chairs and a bookcase.

“Oh! we are all glad night has come, for it has been one of the most trying of days. All day long the South wind has blown, so stifling, so parching. It is the wind that makes everybody cross in China. I never imagined anything like it at home. What poor creatures we are after all, that climate has such an effect upon us!”

“*July, 1906.*”

“I have been greatly in despair for a dispenser. My girl in Chinchow will not be home for another six months, and I need two, one to give chloroform, and one to look after the instruments. Indeed, we were in extremity until



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we bethought ourselves of Elder Shang's nice tall daughter of nineteen, who left school a year ago. So we just went and asked her parents, and they were delighted. The girl always thought she would like to help me and never liked to say anything about it. The patients are numerous on Saturday mornings. I tried to talk a little last Saturday. We have John 3. 16 in large print on the wall. I began, 'God—do you know who God is?' No, nobody knew, so I had to ask old Mrs. Fo to explain to them. Then 'loved the world' was another stumbling-block and had to be explained too. I then told them God had only one Son. He had no other. So one old woman said, 'That's like me. I have only one son.' After that they began to understand a little more, but, oh dear! it is dreadful trying to say things in an alien tongue."

*"September, 1906.*

"It is strange one cannot tell who will suit the climate. Look at me, never ill at home and here behaving so disgracefully. I hope this is the last of it and I am actually glad to see the brown hills and to think the snow is coming, for there will be no more of my enemy, the heat."



## LEARNING THE SECRET

*“ Later.*

“ I have been very well for a whole week, and have my walks and drill with the school-girls and singing classes again, and my regular study, and am feeling quite vigorous. The Eighth Moon Feast was celebrated this week, and the talkative Mrs. Wang invited us to her house. I think that feast completed the cure, I enjoyed it so. Old Mrs. Wang took me to a quiet corner by myself and gave me a most motherly talk, that I was not to be homesick or anxious when I could not see my home people, and that the Heavenly Father would look after my old Mother. You see, I am no longer the wise Medicine Woman of the district, but a little sick child that needs to be comforted and advised. I was greatly amused, and intend to fish out a tonic for myself, which I expect will make the household bills go up.”

*“ MOUKDEN, October, 1906.*

“ I told you about our land being bought in Fakumen. I think it was dear, though I don't know how much in English money, but it was the only place we could buy at a reasonable price, and it is a good site, and will do for ages, I hope. Fancy, if some day there



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is a little hospital there ! But I am in Moukden now for my Language Examination and mean to forget Fakumen for a little. We had a very good journey. The last three miles of our road we travelled in darkness through water and mud. Miss Mac says we are going to be rich, because we always have bad weather for travelling.

“ We came to the outside wall of this famous city to find the gates closed, so we skirted round the wall to the gate through which the railway traffic goes, which is always open. A sentry with a gleaming bayonet came and peered into our faces in the darkness of the cart, but let us pass. We reached our destination at eight o'clock, and were very glad we had pushed on our last bit, for the thunder and lightning and rain were dreadful through the night. The first day we had the British Consul of Newchwang and his architect to luncheon. They were staying in a Japanese Hotel, but were glad to come to Mr. Fulton's <sup>1</sup> for a meal. I *did* enjoy hearing the party. It was quite nice too, to be out of the missionary element a little, and to hear of the glorious busy world. These men cannot

<sup>1</sup> Rev. T. C. Fulton, M.A., D.D., Principal of the Manchuria Theological College, Moukden.



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understand how people can exist in the interior, and they would not for the world sleep in a Chinese inn. Well, I was afraid all this would put my examination out of my head, but Mr. Fulton set me two papers to write. He went over them with me, every word and even every tone. I feel as if I had had a tremendous help with the language. Best of all, he was pleased, I think, and that has made me gladder than anything. I am just in the seventh heaven of delight that it is all over, and I have put away John in the bottom of my box and I don't want to look at him again. You know how much I want to be able to speak Chinese, and indeed I was afraid. How much good a little encouragement does one! In the evening Mrs. Fulton and I sat by the stove and talked, and the one year's experience learned many things from the twenty-five years' experience."

" FAKUMEN, *October*, 1906.

" Home again. I began by opening my big barrel of medicines, and I had a busy full week. It was a great delight to see bottle after bottle appearing, and my dispenser and I were quite excited. Whether the news of my medicines being opened was spread over



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the countryside or not, I do not know, but straight came a message for me from a village seven miles away to know, could I go to a woman there. The old lady and I started off in the little blue covered cart, she with her Bible and I with my bag, and we jolted over the wide country track, our escort riding on a donkey behind. The village lay at the foot of a long line of western hills, which we have watched from afar so long that it was like paying a visit to old friends to come near them. When I had finished seeing my lady, I saw the rest of the village, all the sick women and babies they could muster! Why can I not cure blind eyes and deaf ears? I don't astonish them at all by what I can do, but by what I *can't*, which after all is not surprising. Old Mrs. Fo talked and preached away all the time with her glasses on, and her big Bible on her knee and her old face beaming. Then they cleared the room again, and we all had prayers together and sang out of some hymn books which they produced from somewhere. When I returned I found a message from an old Deacon up in the hills, who could not sleep with a very bad foot, and an urgent appeal for me to go there, so the next day saw me off again. I had a big open cart this



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time and I went alone, as it was not far. Miss Mac laughed at the sight of me in my gorgeous sealskin squatted in the middle of the old farm cart and about twice as broad as I was long. In this fashion I went through Fakumen, and of course my acquaintances all saw me, and it was 'Where are you going, Doctor?' The old man was very ill with rheumatic fever. After the professional bit was over, I asked the children to talk to me. I got all the wee ones on the kang and told them the story of the Good Shepherd, that I had had with my own tiny tots on Sunday. My talking leaves very much to be desired. Then the big cart was ready again, and I wish you had seen the triumphal procession out of the yard with all the little ones around, while the Queen of Sheba sat in the middle, and the old driver and a young son made the balance right in front, and we had to make many promises to come again.

"These days did not leave me much time to prepare for the opening of the new Dispensary. While we were away, the masons and carpenters were busy. We came back to find a boarded floor and shining glass windows instead of the paper ones. The sunshine fills it all day long now. It is very tiny, only two



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small rooms. Saturday morning found us with all the bottles in their places and the dispenser and Doctor both in their new aprons. We had a crowd. Mrs. Fo preached as they waited, and then they came in one by one to see me. The new Dispensary ledger soon had its first page filled. I had to run out and in between times and try to show my distracted dispenser where the medicines were. She only knows the names of about six, but still even that was a help, and she could measure out salts and eye-washes without any help. It was three o'clock when we returned to dinner.

“Even with the rolling seas between, we shall be quite gay for Christmas, because China is God's land as well as Ireland, and it is indeed a good land, a land of brooks of water, yes, and valleys and hills, and I am very happy to be here, and always there is the memory of the great goodness behind it all. It was almost dinner-time when the long-looked-for mail came in, and oh, what a feast for a hungry soul! Never think your letters are too long. Remember your news is all that keeps me in touch with the outside world and the sheets are soon read, though I read them over and over again until the next comes.”



## LEARNING THE SECRET

*"Christmas Night, 1906.*

"Do you know what night this is? And I, where am I? Not here at all, I think. We have had such a happy Christmas Day, so happy that I must tell it all to you before I go to sleep and the memory is dimmed by to-morrow's work. When we reached the Church gate, we found two new huge white flags with the Red Cross, and from the decorated gateway to the Church door we walked between green trees in full (paper) flower, pink and yellow, while over our heads were two long lines of flags. I should not have known the place. We went inside and closed the doors and started to our two big trees. All the Deacons were there and the Elder, and they sent us into fits by their delight over blowing the trumpets and making the dollies' eyes to open and shut. They helped us to hang the high things, and really the trees were a picture. In the middle of our hurry, Miss Mac came in and whispered to me, 'There's a big home mail in, but you will have to wait.' That, as you very well know, was the crowning point to my day's happiness. I felt like shouting for joy. When all was ready we opened the doors. I brought the girls together, and we sang, as the people



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gathered, very nicely and very sweetly. Such a crowd ! The women were overflowing their part. We allowed all my tiny tots to sit on the front benches right in front of the trees. The blue curtain <sup>1</sup> made me laugh every time I looked down at it. It was so bulged out and looked as if it must burst every minute. The men and the boys filled their place too, aye, every corner. Then we all had to settle and the Elder read the sweet Story of Old and then we sang. We had practised and practised hard, but when the great volume of sound rose, it was beyond our best expectations. Everybody sang. They could not help it. I think I hear them yet.

‘ Oh, come to my heart, Lord Jesus,  
There’s room in my heart for Thee.’

It is wonderful, is it not ? ‘ These from the land of Sinim.’ I believe there was room in many hearts to-day. Then the Elder spoke. He said : ‘ We are all happy to-day. This bright day and the merriment and these toys, this is all joy. But there is another joy far greater and bigger than this in our hearts. What is it ? Because our Lord was born

<sup>1</sup> In the Church a curtain about four feet high stretches from one end of the building to the other, separating the sexes.



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to-day.' And so he went on. When the Christmas feast was almost ready, we two slipped home to our mail. Letters from everybody, from all over the world, and all on Christmas Day. How could we help but be happy ? ”



## CHAPTER IV

### BEARING THEIR INFIRMITIES

1907

“ Ah ! the East has a charm that is all its own  
And it woos with a winning smile,  
And your heart must smile its answer back  
Though it aches a little the while.”

I. D. M.

“ FAKUMEN, *January*, 1907.

“ Dr. Crooks <sup>1</sup> has come, with five cases of medicine. She brought my dispenser, Miss Jang, home with her, very full of tales of the Chinchow Hospital, but quite willing to start to the little work here. Miss Shang is delighted to have her, and I am going to make them do the dispensing and dressings week about, so that the work will be easier. I had Miss Jang up for her first exam. to-day and she did most creditably. Fifty and more names of medicines she can write and recognise, and wrote me

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Emma Crooks, of Kirin, came to stay for some months to assist Dr. Mitchell in the beginning of her work.



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quite a good paper on the use of the simpler ones and the meaning of the Latin names we use in prescriptions. So she is going to have her wages raised from 4s. to 6s. a month now, and she pays her food out of that. The school girls, who are leaving for the Chinese New Year holidays, are in floods of tears at having to go home. Poor girls, I think there is not much brightness in any of their lives and they are very happy at School. The last to go was Miss Jang, the dispenser. As she has not been home for a year and has been working hard, I had to let her go. I do not think any one in her village has ever seen a train, so she will be quite a famous traveller. Even she was rather tearful, though she is not given to tears."

*" Later.*

" To-day has been exciting. Do you remember the woman who was ill in the village at the foot of the hills. She herself came in to-day looking so well and bright, sitting on the famous cart, all rolled up in a fur coat. She came in to return thanks and brought a small present for the Hospital—a big live sheep with a furry white coat, which is now enjoying its evening meal in our coal house, also a brace of pheasants and two



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big fish and a basket of ninety eggs. I wish you had seen the array in the study and the sheep disporting itself in the yard behind, and in the middle of all, Mrs. Li with her beaming face. We explained to her that we could not take presents, but that we would take the things she had brought and give their equivalent in money to the Hospital. So she counted up quite nicely how much money she had spent, and altogether the subscription comes to 22s. in English money. It is much the largest subscription we have had from the Chinese. Then the old lady and her son-in-law had tea with us and saw all the queer foreign house, and in the dining-room we played the organ and sang a hymn to them. They have been afraid to be identified with Christianity ever since the Boxer time, when some of their relations suffered badly.

“We have had the first operation in Fakumen Dispensary. Dr. Crooks did it, and great were our preparations. The patient was very good, though she had only cocaine, not chloroform, and I think the operation is going to be most successful. Next afternoon we were called to a bad case, a bigger operation even than I had done in Glasgow, and by 11 p.m. we were all very tired. It is a



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wonderful life. Sometimes I think I like it better than anything else in the world, and sometimes I am so tired and things are so hard, I want to go home to the quiet room and the hyacinths. To-night I like it best.

“Oh, how we wish and wish for a ward ! But I know the work will be far stronger and better, if the people themselves help to build it up. I do hope, instead of always looking for what they can get, they will learn to give. Good little Miss Jang always hands me back a tenth, when I pay her monthly wages, to be put to the Church, and I know her wages hardly do more than pay her food at the School.”

“ *February, 1907.*

“ We visited the Buddhist Temple and I shall send you a photo of the Buddha. He has a lesser Buddha on each side and two huge warriors standing on the floor. I can give you no idea of that big musty, dusty, dark temple, with these huge monsters, and glaring eyes and hideous mouths. They baffle all description. It gives me a terrible hopeless feeling sometimes just to see it all, and to think what a tiny, tiny speck the Christians are in the midst of the millions who are so busy worshipping the idols ; but ‘ He must reign,’



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and we must believe that some day it will all pass away. Sometimes it seems like hurling our poor little lives against a great stone wall. Heathendom is so vast."

*" March, 1907.*

" I sometimes wonder what kind of a place Fakumen would be if it were not for the faithful postman. Such nice letters of New Year's Day. I have been reading them again, and saying over and over—'The Pilgrim's Way already lies like an open book before the Sleepless Eye.' It is a rest even to think of it, for sometimes I am restless and think, 'Is it all worth while? Am I really making a difference in anybody's life out here?' They are so contented, most of the women, and don't want to know anything higher, and I become careless and disheartened too. And yet, deep down I know I am happier just here and doing this work, and it is only myself I am discontented with, not the life.

" I have just been sitting with a patient, a half-caste, who used to come often to see me. I found out then that she could read a little, and I gave her a book. She read it to me to-day from cover to cover, and the rest of the family all sat round and listened



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to the story of Christ healing the blind and the leper and raising the widow's son and stilling the storm. They are all heathen and my patient is the only one who can read. She is eager to learn. I wish I could say more and make her realise how necessary it is! She is a nice woman and is the same age as I am, which fact has greatly delighted her and made us friends from the first.

"We paid a great visit last week to our little Japanese doctors, who have brought back their wives this time from Japan, and a trained Japanese nurse. They live in a temple on the West Street. There is a big garden full of trees, and we pass through two courtyards and then up the steps into a temple where all the dusty gods are undisturbed. In a little room we were received by our doctors. The small nurse soon appeared with a little lacquer tray, on which were the loveliest little cups turned upside down and an absurd tiny toy teapot. We were fed on marshmallows, pale pink and white, which we fished out of the box by tiny wooden holders. The ladies soon appeared, each carrying a big son. The babies were so quaint with their hair cut like the Japanese dolls, and the mothers are beautiful. Such sweet little



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creatures, who bow to the ground and smile and show their pretty teeth, but not a word can we say to them or they to us. We have to talk to the husbands in Chinese and they interpret. It was the first time we had put on our best hats and gloves, and taken our card cases to make a call in Fakumen. The very next afternoon they all arrived to return our call, the babies being wheeled, each in a tiny perambulator. Our ladies were dressed, and really anything like the wonderful shades of silk girdles and flowing sleeves it has never been my lot to behold in poor Fakumen, the place of squalor and ugliness, of poverty and mud houses and dirt. We did our best to entertain, though they had taken us by surprise. They saw over the house afterwards, but it is really dumb charades all the time. Going away they presented us with two beautiful boxes of sweets, which, to our great amusement, were inscribed with 'Please accept this small token of love,' and the two doctors' names."

*"April, 1907.*

"The Dispensary is busier than ever, and there are so many surgical cases with dressings that they take a long time. I allowed Miss



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Jang to open her first abscess the other day. She was quite calm over it, as the Chinese don't get excited. You will hardly believe it that the days are as rushed as they used to be at home. Indeed, there is hardly an hour of the day just now when we are not flying. We had our record Dispensary day on Saturday. We had over 100 names. It is not many compared with some Indian Hospitals, but it is more than they had on any single day last year in Chinchow, which was our only Irish Women's Hospital open that year in Manchuria. Of course, we don't want the great numbers as much as we want the real work done among them.

"We have had sadness too. A nice little girl of sixteen, with some very malignant tumours had besought us so often to remove them that, though it was a big operation, we at last said we would. I was anxious that it should be done before Dr. Crooks left. We removed four tumours from under her arm. She stood the chloroform splendidly and talked to us after the operation as bright as could be. Her mother stayed all night beside her. She was very weak at bedtime, but though we were anxious, we were not alarmed. They came to call me at four next morning,



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and I found the child collapsed and evidently very far through. I sent for Dr. Crooks and together we did everything we could, but at six o'clock she died. I held her hands, poor little mite. She was conscious to the last, but I think I shall never forget that fight with death. It was sheer collapse from the shock of the operation, and perhaps you can imagine a little of what we felt after everything had gone so well. I could not go back to the house, but went away by myself over the lonely hills in the clear morning. Everything was so full of life and joy, I could not believe our little lassie was lying cold and still. I had taught her about Jesus at prayer-time and she liked to listen and learn, and now I hope she has gone to the fuller light and to see Him face to face.<sup>1</sup> The friends were so nice, no reproaches though we expected them. They took her away quietly, and when the out-patients came all was quiet and orderly and work went on as usual, only that my three dispensers had very white faces all day and I had not much heart for my work. I thought the calamity in Hospital would keep everybody from us for months, but it has not done so in the least,

<sup>1</sup> It is to this girl that the poem, "Where is She To-day?" in Chapter X. refers.



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and it has brought out our girls wonderfully. We have all drawn closer together and their prayers at prayer-time have a deeper note and they are far more earnest over their work now. We had actually three more operations yesterday, and have two more for to-morrow, and no one speaks of being even afraid. I cannot understand it, but I am very very glad. All the Hospitals here suffer sometimes when there are deaths, and we must face things when they come."

"NEWCHWANG, *May*, 1907.

"The Annual Meetings are in full swing. One afternoon in committee I besought permission to ask the Home Board for a Hospital in Fakumen. I made my maiden speech. It was a new experience and I have come to the conclusion that I should like to be an M.P., of course always with right on my side. As to the decision, for myself and my dear dear patients, I am delighted and my heart is filled with a great deep joy that Fakumen is to be my place, for I love it, every brick and stone.

"I do not much like the prospect of tackling things alone when Dr. Crooks is gone. It has been so nice having some one to share the work here. She feels, I think, that I am rather inexperienced to be left to run the



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medical work all alone. I wish she could have stayed, but Kirin is a huge place and they could not spare two of us for this town."

" FAKUMEN, *June*, 1907.

" I have had a most interesting visit this afternoon. A cart came for me to go to see an old lady and I went off. The queerest little rickety cart you ever saw, and a small boy to keep me company, while a nice old Chinese gentleman walked behind to complete the procession. The house was in a quiet back street. Another nice old gentleman with a silk coat was standing at the compound gate and escorted us in, while young Quicksilver carried my bag. There were flowers and flowering shrubs in pots, and some of the pots of most beautiful white lilies were in full bloom. I found my patient a little woman with a white face lined with suffering, sitting on a bright kang covered with skins and rugs. There were three clocks ticking in the room, and the walls were covered with strange pictures which the master of the house himself had painted, and all was pervaded with a faint sweet odour from a bowl where incense was burning. The silk-coated gentleman, husband of my patient, began chatting most



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interestedly. We had the patient seen to first, a rather hopeless case, but we may be able to relieve her a little. She was most grateful for all I did. Her small son piled up three small pillows for her to rest her hand on, while I felt her pulse. It seems the Chinese doctors sometimes feel the pulse for an hour at a time, so they don't think much of half a minute. Then I asked to see her tongue, and Mr. Silkcoat had to bring a bowl of water. After repeated washings of her mouth I was permitted to see the tongue, and finally I was able to extract all the information I needed. Then they brought tea and I sat down for a chat, and who do you think Mr. Silkcoat turned out to be? The priest of the Mohammedan Mosque here. He has such a nice face and we made friends at once. He had a string of beads in his hands, and while he sat he was counting them over and repeating little prayers. He has travelled too, and has been to Arabia. He showed me Arabic books and read me a page. I told him I had often admired the Mosque, where the doves sit all day in the sun, but had never been inside. He asked me if I should like to go in, and said he would take me straight away. So after I had seen all the family and relations



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and been presented with a bunch of all the pure white lilies which were in bloom, I followed the stately old priest. We went into the Mosque compound and up steps to the long line of doors of entrance. Here we had to leave off our slippers. I was glad I had not on my boots. Then we went into a big square plain room with a wooden floor, where matting was spread for the worshippers to kneel on. He showed me the place where he stood to preach, and I asked him what they worshipped, since they did not worship idols. 'We worship the Lord,' he said, 'and we understand about Jesus.' The schoolboys gathered in after us, headed by little Quicksilver. I was amused at the sight of my brown slippers among the rows of Chinese ones, little and big, and they were amused at my black-stockinged feet. Five times a day does my old priest lead worship in that place, turning to the West and calling upon Allah. He said they had about twenty worshippers every day, and about one hundred on Friday, which is their 'Worship Day.' It was drawing near prayer-time, so I left him at the Mosque gate, while my other old friend escorted me to the waiting cart, and Quicksilver came with me for the medicine. I felt that I had had a



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most instructive afternoon and I am going back to see my old lady. I promised to lend their school teacher a copy of the Bible, which he has never seen. The old priest saw it in Arabia, but does not possess one."

*"June, 1907.*

"To-day I wanted to walk off all the patients and their worries, so I climbed to the top of a far away hill, where there are some lonely graves, and watched the sun go down. Such a picture, as I came home with my face to the West. The great silver harvest moon rising high up, and at my feet leagues and leagues of harvest fields, some partly reaped, but most waving with thousands of heavy brown heads. The words came into my mind, 'Fields white unto the harvest,' and in the distance were the thousands of little tiled roofs with the Mohammedan Mosque rising above them. Yes, fields white unto the harvest, but the reapers are very few. It seemed quite right to come back to the little Hospital and the suffering and the miserable. We want to reap the deeper harvest, too, that ripens on the mountains of beauty.

'Some with the heart's blood are ruddy,  
The harvest of sorrow and pain.' "



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*"July, 1907.*

"To-day has been a great day in Church. Yesterday both men and women were examined by the Pastor, and to-day twenty-three women and girls were baptised, and a good many men. Mr. O'Neill found the women much better prepared than the men, which has greatly pleased Miss Mac, and indeed she has worked hard. It was a sight to see five forms of women all so earnest and willing and brave enough for once to go out beyond the blue curtain which generally separates them in Church from the men, and stand and confess their faith in Christ before a big congregation that could not even find sitting room. Some were my special friends. There was Mrs. Hsia, my very first patient in Fakumen, she and her old mother-in-law and her young sister-in-law. She was just beaming, and she came to me at the end to tell me her husband has put down his name as an enquirer. He is the big man who used to carry the lantern for me on my midnight visits to his home.

"As our new house will soon be ready, we invited the O'Neills to our old Chinese quarters for a last supper. We were treated to unexpected entertainment in the shape



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of a thunderstorm with sheet after sheet of lightning. It was wonderful, lighting up the old dim yard and the withered flowers in our garden. The rain ripped at the paper windows and the wind blew them into great holes. Then, without warning, the drops began to descend on our unoffending heads. As they came through the mud roof, they were anything but clean. We had to rush and bring waterproofs for our guests. The supper was finished with an umbrella over the table, while the floor was like a crockery shop let loose to catch the streams. So we think it will soon be time to move."

*"October, 1907.*

"Our first Sunday night in the little new grey house.<sup>1</sup> It is so cosy. Strange to relate, we have been almost too hot. We have been blazing away at wood fires in our stoves to make sure that the house was dry and warm. It would have been better to have waited a day or two longer, but that little place was just perishing. We wore our big coats and hats all day long and were still shivering, so we just packed up and came, and what a difference! Poor Miss Mac has not long to

<sup>1</sup> The new Fakumen Ladies' House was built in the autumn of 1907.



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enjoy it. She must go off on a three weeks' journey in the little cart with her Biblewoman. She will not receive any letters and will not be able to send any, so she is loth to leave our new comfortable house."

" *November, 1907.*

" Monday was a wild day and I had not many patients, but just as I was coming away from the Dispensary, a cart came, an open country cart with an old man and an old woman, and a white-faced girl whom they carried in to the Dispensary kang. She was blue with cold, but smiled even then. Three days in an open cart through all the snow and mud, coming from a place thirty-seven miles away, because some one had told them that a friend of theirs had been in Fakumen to see another friend who had a friend in a Hospital, where there was a woman doctor, an Englishwoman who had skill. So with hearts full of faith off they came at once, bringing their daughter who has suffered for two years and has not walked for eight months and more. Poor little lassie, what a foot, the size of a head and wrapped up in layer after layer of Chinese paper! She began undoing her parcel, and before long my little dis-



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penser had to open all the windows, as we all felt ill. I wonder what the poor child had suffered all these months, and specially on that long cart journey. I told them at once there was nothing for it but amputation. They never hesitated. 'All right, Doctor, take it off.' We put her on a warm kang and gave her some food. I thought of sending her to Moukden, and I went home to consider and to ask for guidance. I knew it should be done, and done at once, in spite of shaking knees. You cannot think what it was like to come home that night to a little lonely house and not be able to say to any one, 'I have to amputate a foot to-morrow.' I know I am a most awful goose to be so afraid, and I don't tell other people, but you know me better than to think I am brave. Suffice it to say that on the morrow it was done. Shang girl gave chloroform for me, and the two Jang girls helped me. In an hour it was all over, and she was back on her kang, trying very hard to smile at me when I asked her did she know me. She was very sick for two days, but never once one little murmur. She is feeling so well now and wanted to sit up to-day. I think I never in all my experience saw such a plucky and patient little soul. Troubles never come



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singly. Another child arrived next day with abscess of the lung. He is a motherless little boy of twelve. In the daytime he lies on the kang, and little Sunny Face comforts him by telling him he will be better soon. He is a quaint little fellow and said to me to-day—  
‘Doctor, having you is just like having my mother again. She died when I was nine.’  
Poor little man, I am afraid he won’t do much good, though he came through the operation all right. Now for my treble trouble. A woman whom I had seen a month ago, came back to say the amputation I recommended her then, she wanted done at once. She had been waiting for her husband’s return, and he had just arrived home. It was in vain I tried to put them off, so I took her in and we prepared the next foot. It took us a longer time, for it was far harder than the little girl’s. She is a big stout woman and it was no easy matter. She is now sleeping on the kang where I had my bed all summer, so I have three wards now. I was very tired, and enjoyed my Sunday rest after the dressings were done.

“A quiet Sunday night and a quiet little manse, and I have got my *husband* home again. She was more than three weeks away, and



## BEARING THEIR INFIRMITIES

glad indeed was I to see the little blue cart coming through the gate. She has had a good journey in spite of the bitterly cold weather, but the warm welcome made up for it. She has come back so anxious to go out and live in so many places, that I don't know how we shall keep her at home. Some of the villages are big big towns, with as many women as Fakumen, and no one to teach them. The people were all so glad to see her, and came in carts from ever so far in the country when they heard she was coming. Sometimes the women would stay the night and sleep on the kang with her, and then she would come to know them better.

"I do hope we may go on to great things here, not that I mind about beautiful buildings so much, but there are lots of things I cannot attempt, for I have no place to put the patients and no help. I want them to have really good medical attendance, not as slipshod as it is now."

*"December, 1907.*

"My second Language Exam. is over and I am back to my dear Hospital with a clear mind. The morning I left Moukden I was very cold before I got into the train. There were no stoves and I was sitting all rolled up in my



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corner, when a friendly little Japanese stepped over with an old kerosene oil tin full of glowing charcoal. 'Please haf a warm,' said he, which you may be sure I was most pleased to do. At a wayside station a French Priest came in, in a half-frozen condition. He gazed and gazed at our little glowing pan, and finally could not resist, so he stepped over too and joined us. He asked me did I speak French, but I said I would rather talk Chinese. Just through my exam., you see, and feeling very proficient. Se we had quite a nice talk. He told me on no account to stay in an inn at Tieling, as there were so many Japanese. I said goodnight to my two friends, and landed out with piles of parcels into a station just seething with Japs and Chinese. No carts were to be had so late at night, and I had to send old Lio off into the town a mile away to hire me one. For the first time in my journeyings here, I felt really afraid. I had over £100 on my person, which I was bringing up for Mr. O. and Miss Mac and myself for our winter supply. I did wish I was not a bold and independent New Woman, but had somebody to take care of me and my belongings. We left at daybreak and did our thirty miles in good time. At sunset we



## BEARING THEIR INFIRMITIES

crossed the last ridge of hills and I saw dear Fakumen and the little grey house."

"*Christmas Eve*, 1907.

"Do you know what came to-day? My Christmas-box. Yes, through all the snow and the storm, a nice bulky parcel for me, and one the very same size for Sally,<sup>1</sup> just in case there should be any jealousy, you see. It was nearly dark, but I had two very sick patients to attend. We are a little rushed these days. However, I tore down and saw them and saw that all was right in Hospital, and then I tore up again to the Manse, and with a big parcel under each arm, and a sheaf of letters, I fought my way home across the road. Such a storm! I arrived white with snow, no hair to speak of, and the remains of a hat, but Sally said I did a war dance round the dining-room table to think the parcels had come through after all. Oh! you have no idea what excitement a surprise makes here. You will think I am crazy, and indeed, so I am. I had not had a letter for so long and was so hungry, and every one of these darlings sent me cards with their own writing on them, and the photo of little Romeo himself all

<sup>1</sup> Miss M'Williams.



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shorn of his curls. You would be ashamed of me if you knew how long I have knelt here by the fire gazing at that wee face and just aching to give him a kiss.

"Ice right to the bottom of our jugs in the bedroom. Our poor geraniums and bulbs all dead in the night. Snowdrifts in our bedrooms and crevices of the windows. I have had no weather like this since I came to China."



## CHAPTER V

### DREAMS COMING TRUE

1908, 1909

“ Because of little death-cold feet, for earth’s  
Rough roads unmeet,  
I’d journey leagues to save from sin and harm  
Such little feet ;  
And count the lowliest service done for them  
So sacred-sweet.”

I. D. M.

“ FAKUMEN, *January*, 1908.

“ Just now I am giving my dispensers Anatomy lessons. They are very interested in the body—thought they had two livers and one lung; and that their backbone was all of one piece. They think I tell them fables sometimes. I have a wonderful patent for a wooden leg. A nice little doctor at Peitaiho showed me one a patient was wearing. I drew a sketch for the native carpenter here, and he made me quite a nice one. The first try, he made the leg about three times as fat as it should be, but he made another, and now



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it is very genteel. I do like when the patients recover, and as my amputations caused me many an anxious night, so I am glad to see them on their feet again.

“We in Manchuria are having the beginning of a Revival which we are hoping and praying will spread and reach us all. It began two weeks ago in Moukden. Mr. Goforth,<sup>1</sup> from Honan, was up having special meetings. He had been in Korea, and seen the Revival work there, and told the people about it all. They were little impressed the first few days, but then they began to be gripped. A whole meeting down on its knees, and all praying aloud at once, and some with strong crying and tears. The Elders and the people have been making confession of sin. Old debts are being paid up, and the good work is going deep. It reads like Wales, and is wonderful, wonderful, especially for China.”

“NEWCHWANG, *March*, 1908.

“We have been able to welcome the travellers<sup>2</sup> at last. I arrived in the darkness last night and they met me in the garden.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. Goforth, of the Canadian Presbyterian Mission.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. James McWhirter, M.A., and Mrs. McWhirter (Dr. Mitchell's sister, Janie) arrived in China for the first time in spring, 1908.



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

I could hardly believe it was my very own sister and her husband. Somehow we came in, and somehow I took off my hat, and somehow we had supper, and then we talked in the cosy study which Janie had made all nice and homely with flowers, and the big sofa drawn up beside the stove. Then we three sang 'O God, our Help in Ages past.' When I turned into bed, in the same room I had slept in my first night in Manchuria more than three years ago, I lay and thought and thought, and thought long thoughts which led me far back into forgotten places, and finally I went to sleep wondering which was real, and if I had really been awake and seen Janie again, or was it all a dream?

"The meetings began the next day, and as twenty women were expected in from out-stations, Mr. Hunter<sup>1</sup> said that if I did not stay, they would have to send for some one to come to help, for there was no one to say a word to them. The men can do nothing with them, especially if they are in distress. I was sad and sore for my little Hospital and my neglected patients, but I stayed and did my best. It was a strange week for me, and it

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Wm. Hunter, B.A., of Kwangning.



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has done me good. The meetings were past words, awful and terrible. My recollections are of being on my knees, among the company of weeping women, while we all sobbed and tried not to hear the awful agony of the men, who were in such distress. I know now what a Revival is like, and surely, surely, it is a most painful process. It reminded me of the tales Father used to tell us of '59 and the groups in the fields about Coleraine. All the meetings were held in the Church. The women and I had a little corner to ourselves. Janie was on the other side at the organ. She and Jim went to all the meetings and were the greatest help. She played all the hymns. Mr. Goforth had given her some to be always ready with, and often the only thing that quieted the long cries and weeping, was the organ beginning, 'Weeping will not save me,' and then we would all rise to our feet and the roof would ring, not very much in tune perhaps, but very much in earnest. The confessions were the saddest bit. As Mr. Goforth said, the Church was a den of iniquity, and it was a continual marvel to him that God had ever used such a sinful instrument. As for me, I used to wonder if a company of the blackest of heathendom could have confessed



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

worse sins than that company of Christians. You know perhaps how painful it was, the awful agony of those who felt their sins, and could find no peace until they had told it out, and the awful burning shame of the leaders in the Church.

“So that was my extra week at the Port. When I said goodbye to the women they reminded me of my promise to pray for them every day.”

“FAKUMEN, *April*, 1908.

“It is dark night, and I have been coming home alone under the quiet stars. Perhaps I am lonely. Certainly I am homesick. I am trying very hard not to become too busy, and I keep remembering what Mr. Goforth said about dropping all this busy work until we received the right power into our lives. It is so hard just here where the crowds press every day. The little Hospital is quite full. We were quite crowded out last night. Three patients arrived in after dark, having come seventeen miles and no place to go to. We could not turn them away, but we had not an inch of room.

“At the end of our Church service, there was a sheaf of letters read from the different out-stations which cheered us. The same wonder-



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ful work is going on wherever the evangelists go. The same confessions with tears and weeping. The same generous giving and the change of lives.

“It is over, my big amputation, and my woman is well and happy so far. I felt shaky and horrible about it all week, but to-day we are all calm and bright. We had sunshine and quietness. I don’t know why those two hours should leave us all feeling like rags. They are so grateful, these people. The husband of the woman says he is going home to tear down all his idols and put them in the fire. He was here over the Sunday and in Church. There is quite a different spirit in the Hospital since the meetings. The women are all reading and interested. I am now due at the Hospital for my turn at evening worship. My girls and I meet each morning for a little prayer before we begin the day’s work.”

“*May, 1908.*

“The medical work is, I was going to say, overwhelming, but I remembered my text of this morning, and it is Isa. 43. 2.<sup>1</sup> What

<sup>1</sup> “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

horrible medical letters I do write, but it is all I have to tell. No, I forgot, we had a picnic last Saturday afternoon, Mrs. O'Neill and Pat and Baby<sup>1</sup> and I. Miss Mac was away for the day to a village preaching and teaching, and we had to go without her. We walked up to a little group of trees, *my* trees, on the hillside. The 'boy' was already there and had the kettle boiling, and we made a merry little party. Sandwiches of bread and butter and sugar. Our jam is done long since. Pat and I made a fine house of stones and tiles, and we had a lovely time.

"You are thinking of me, but I am not afraid of the loneliness and the responsibility any more. Do you realise that I am quite alone, alone medically, I mean? Every day I think the Mission could not have left a more inexperienced doctor anywhere, than it is doing, to tackle this big work alone in Faku-men. I would be ashamed to tell you how frightened I have been. Sometimes I just clench my hands and wish I could rush away anywhere and leave it all. Oh! that year of furlough, what is it not going to contain? Ten years packed into one, I think. My teacher is in despair. He comes at 3.30

<sup>1</sup> Pat and Denis O'Neill.



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every afternoon, and sometimes I am waiting for him, and we begin and I am called out. More often I come landing in at five o'clock or after, and keep the poor man waiting for his evening meal. I amputated another foot on Tuesday. That makes my ninth amputation now, and it is only a year since I was in such agonies over my first attempt. This promises to be the very best of all."

*"July, 1908.*

"My most interesting pair at present are a man and woman in to give up opium smoking. The man sleeps with the gatekeeper, and the woman sleeps in Hospital. Twenty years has this man smoked, until, from a well-off family, they have come to utter poverty, and some Christians in their village helped them to come here. They have six boys, all young. The man can hardly manage to hobble across the compound to Dispensary to let me see him. They have been having a terrible time, suffering agonies indeed, in spite of all we can do for them. I never saw a more miserable pair than they have been. After all, that is a good sign, and I hope they will have strength to hold out. They are a good deal better to-day. They are some fruits of the Revival



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

in their village. Very ignorant, of course, and hard to manage, too. Turned up their noses at the Hospital fare and wanted to go to the street to buy good fare and luxuries which we do not give them. They are free patients, of course, but I am afraid the beggars are the choosers in China."

" *September*, 1908.

" We are home again to the quietness and the peaceful garden and the silent hills, and we are very happy. So we go on right into the thick of it again. Miss Mac and I had quite a lot to say to each other, having spent our holidays in different houses. It amused them very much at Peitaiho<sup>1</sup> to see how we tried to keep away from each other, but we knew we should have the rest of the year in solitude and now we are enjoying each other tremendously. Beautiful September days these are. There is no month like September. Best of all, I have a new dispenser, a very nice school-girl—Li Ching-yun (Shining Cloud)—a new name for you. She is an earnest Christian girl, twenty years of age. She stood the three operations well, and held basins for me like a Briton, though she had never seen chloroform given before. I think she will do. I am

<sup>1</sup> A seaside summer resort on the Gulf of Pechili.

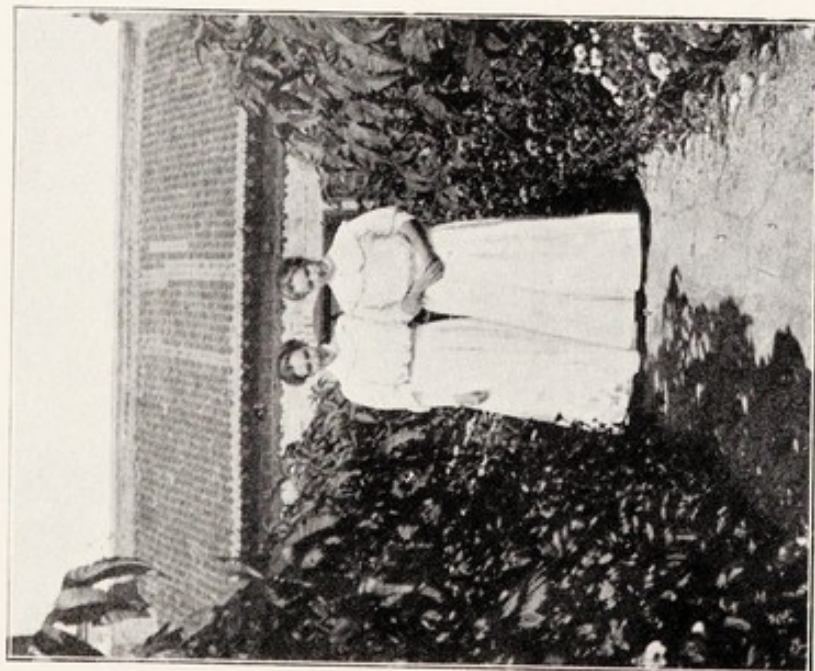


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going to try to make the patients' money cover food and firing. I charge them twopence halfpenny a day. Do you think I shall make any money out of it? Think how easy it would be to support a free bed for me.

"To-day I had just sat down to my books, when the 'boy' came in with a visiting card, 'Sir Alexander Hosie.' He is one of the British Legation people at Peking. We knew he was to be along some time to see about the new railway. I went out and welcomed him, and sent the coolie flying to bring Miss Mac from the School, and the 'boy' to make some tea. Sir Alexander is a fine man and very easy to talk to. He has been in China thirty-two years and laughs at us for babies. He was staying in a Chinese inn with his attendants, and was quite glad to come to us for lunch the other two days he was here. We had to go to work as usual in the morning, of course, and the 'boy' had just to do the best he could. He did very well, save that his jelly did not 'jell,' and his face made me laugh as he brought it in, but we had a fine pie, so it was all right. The next day he was not so ambitious. I am afraid Sir Alec thought he had plain fare. He thought we were remarkably happy all alone, and liked our house, and





"THE LOVERS' WALK."

The Doctor on the left, Miss McWilliams on the right.



WHEN SHE WAS HAPPIEST.







## DREAMS COMING TRUE

roared over the 'Lovers' Walk.' He hates China and would go home again to-morrow if he could. We took him to see the new Girls' School. I wondered why there were so few girls, and we found afterwards that they had been afraid and had run away to hide. Then we took him to the great Hospital. He gasped at my operating theatre, but he spoke nicely to the few ladies who were side by side on the kang, and was amazed at the young girls who could give chloroform and dispense Latin prescriptions. I felt quite puffed up, so I am ready for a fall now."

"October 13, 1908.

"It is three years this very day since the big steamer sailed up to Shanghai, and disgorged a homesick little morsel on the coast of China. She was very young and inexperienced, and life was all before her. Now, well, I hope she has learnt something in the three years, and, though the lessons have been badly learnt, still life is deeper and broader now, and I hope by the time the next two years have gone, that she will have learnt to sink her own little ambitions and grievances, and to be of a little use to humanity. On Sunday afternoon I went down to that little room, with its sixteen patients and a great



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many friends and my dispensers. We had a sing-song, and then, in the darkening, I told them 'The Sower and the Seed,' and for once in my life I held my Chinese audience. I can't tell you what it was like, only I knew they were all listening and some of them were weeping. They came round me afterwards to tell me how 'good to hear' it was, and the woman who was sobbing just put her arms round me and said, 'Doctor, I believe in Jesus.' I could hardly leave them, and I came home wondering and wondering how I was given this great work."

*"December, 1908.*

"Such a dreadful blow has fallen on our little community. Our wee Pat has gone Home. He died after two days' illness—his father three days' journey away; Miss M'Williams out on a journey too. Pneumonia and bronchitis in both lungs. His Mother and I tried everything, the Japanese doctor helping us. We wired for Dr. Muir, from Kaiyuan, but all was over when he arrived. Now there is only a wee white still Pat in his white summer suit, with one white carnation—the only white flower we had—in his little folded hands. We have all been wonderfully upheld, but no one knows what those days and nights were.



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

Thank God, there is Baby Denis ! You will pray for us.

“ We laid little Pat to rest in the compound where the new Church is to be built. The evening after his father came home, we went down and chose the place for the little grave, a desolate field behind the Boys’ School, but it will be nice when the new Church is built. We feel the ground is hallowed now. When the little coffin was carried out, the compound was lined with all the Christians. Deacons, members, schoolboys, and girls, followed us slowly into Church, such a long procession, down the road he had raced along a week before on the little dancing feet. Dr. Muir took the service. We had all his own wee hymns, the ones his Mother sang to him the night he died, ‘ Jesus loves me,’ and ‘ Jesus is our Shepherd,’ and afterwards at the grave, ‘ Safe in the arms of Jesus.’ ”

“ *Later.*

“ On Christmas morning each of the forty-three members of the infant class in Sabbath School brought an offering of a paper flower for the little grave.”

“ *January, 1909.*

“ The New Year is bringing me many great gifts for the New Hospital. Indeed, people



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are kind. They have unloaded more carts of wood in my compound this week, huge trees, and I have been solemnly walking along on top of them, and singing a wee song in my heart, as it was too shaky to dance.

“ I know what I want my birthday gift to be : I want my very own little Pat’s cot there. I shall call it ‘ Sunshine Cot.’

“ The old opium lady wanted to know how I knew that my God and my Bible were true. I told her about Father giving me my little Testament on my fourth birthday, and I said I had read it for twenty-six years, ever since my Mother had taught me to spell it out, and I had never found a word untrue in it.

“ ‘ And who taught your Mother ? ’

“ ‘ My Grandmother.’

“ ‘ Oh ! did she know ? And you have known about it for generations in England. And the mothers teach their children to pray. We never teach our children anything. They just know how to curse and to fight.’

“ And so she and the other patients went on, and I told them all about home, and how I had been afraid to come out, and they were much amused at that. They said they had been afraid of me, and had heard of the



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

Hospital two years ago, but were told we had knives and were very wild and furious.

“Fancy ‘Our Hospital!’ I can do nothing but marvel and wonder whenever I think of it. I have been starting my girls to their Anatomy books, which frighten them so much that I am afraid to give them their Physiology and Chemistry. I want them to prepare all they can to be ready to go to the Moukden lectures next year. They want *me* to teach them all these subjects, but they little know what hours of preparation it means for me before I can give them one lesson. Oh, this language! Am I to walk on crutches all my days? The two senior dispensers are becoming most valuable assistants, and they know just how to put the instruments into my hands, and they are so calm and steady.”

“June, 1909.

“After coming home from the Annual Meetings at Newchwang, I was plunged right into work at once, and it is always best so. I must tell you of the biggest surprise that was waiting for me at home. I went into the garden and here is the huge Hospital gazing down at me over the wall from its eyeless windows, and the front block is at the roof.



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I was so surprised. Of course it is only the rough walls, but to-day they are putting on the great wooden peaks on the roof. It has been so quick, and it looks so very nice. I am tremendously pleased with it all."

" *August, 1909.*

" My thoughts keep going back to the far-away years. Nothing can ever bring back what they have taken away, the old sweet years, but these years are very full and bright, too, for me. I never could have believed I could have been so contented and happy just here and in this work, for I used always to be stretching out and wanting a much fuller and wider life.

" Now I begin to hope that we shall yet be clear of debt for our Opening Day. Only six weeks now. The Chinese are giving very well, and the Elder told me the Merchants' Guild is going to give me something, and the Japanese doctor, decent little man, has given me twenty dollars, and he has not a Hospital of his own. The patients, too, whom I am inviting to the Opening, are going quietly to my old matron to enquire will it do to bring the Doctor presents on that day. So she has my instructions to say :—" No presents, but



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

any who like can put their money towards the Hospital.' I thought of something like 'Refuge under the Shadow of His Wings,' for the name. I am trying to work out the idea and see if I can find a Chinese name to fit it. I am so happy about that little Hospital. Although it has cost a good deal of money, I hope and pray it will be worth it all.

"A notice has come from the Bank saying £100 is there for the Hospital from the ladies of Broughshane. Surely it cannot be a mistake, though it is hardly believable at all, and I have been so excited that I am nearly off my head. How can I ever thank them for all they have done? I go through that beautiful, beautiful Hospital every day and it makes me very humble and very glad. Indeed, we will try to make the work in it good and a little bit worthy of all the trust and love that has been shown."

*"September, 1909.*

"The arrangements for our Big Day are growing more and more complex. The wife of the Magistrate of Fakumen is going to open the Hospital. Help! Help!! I am sure the first thing she will do will be to fall down my lovely doorsteps with her little feet, and the next mishap will be that I shall get tied into



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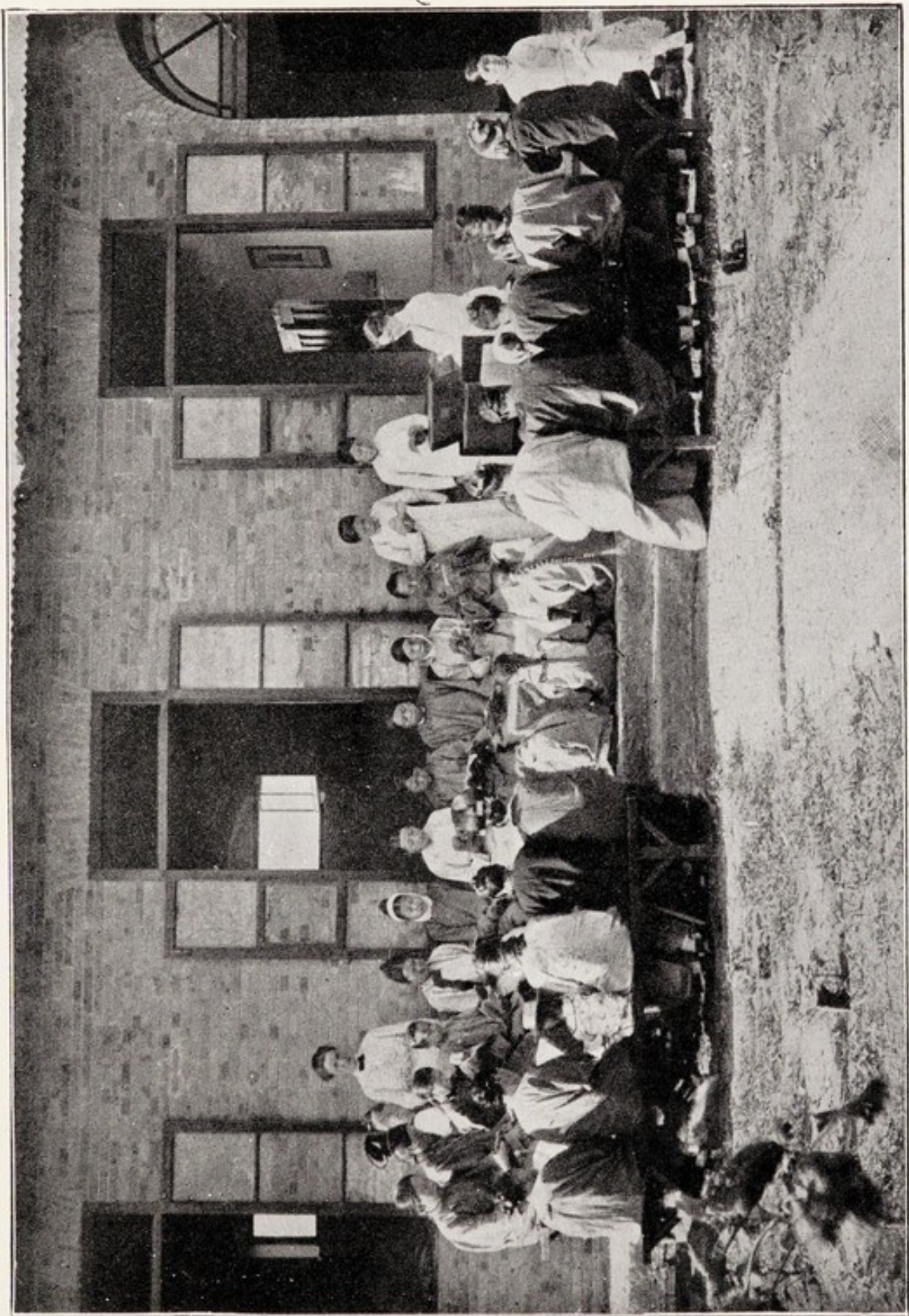
knots trying to speak the polite official language. And how are we to 'tea' hundreds of people? It will all straighten out as the day comes nearer. The Hospital itself is looking really lovely. Paint does make such a difference. Our outside doors are all dark green with brass handles. Inside is light brown woodwork, and the operating room is white."

"October, 1909.

"There<sup>1</sup> is very pleasant news to tell you this time of the opening of our new Women's Hospital. The Hospital is built in two blocks of one storey. The front block is the out-patient department. The second block stands behind this, with garden spaces between, and is for in-patients. There are two large wards here with accommodation for forty, a good operating-room with bright windows, at present shining in all its bravery of new white-enamelled furniture. The buildings are high and airy. They face due South and are sunny and bright all day long. The sleeping accommodation is on kangas for the present, the only bed we have being a little one supported in memory of Pat O'Neill. His

<sup>1</sup> From *Woman's Work*.

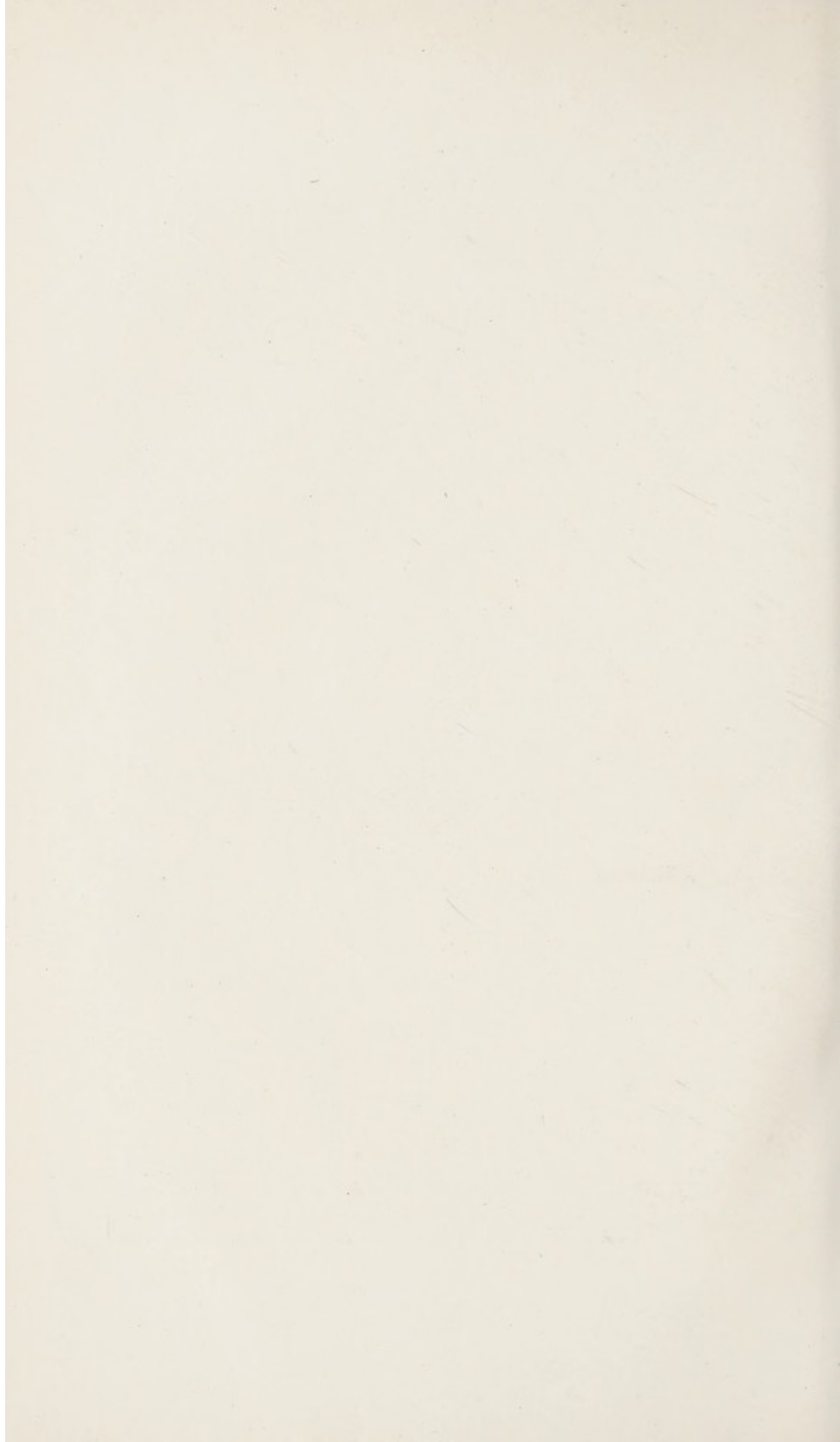




OUTSIDE THE MAIN WARD.

The Doctor at the organ, Miss McWilliams to the left.







## DREAMS COMING TRUE

photograph hangs above it, and it is our one free bed. The whole place is very complete in every way, plain and substantial, but with plenty of room, and we hardly know ourselves with a place for everything. One could hardly imagine a greater contrast than between the new building and the small, dark rooms, where we worked for three years.

“The opening ceremony was on Saturday, October 16th. It was a great week for Fakumen, for the new Church was opened on the following day, and the Missionaries, Chinese Pastors and Elders, and people from the village stations, all came a day earlier and made it a great success. At one o'clock, on a very sunshiny afternoon, the wife of the Prefect of Fakumen opened the entrance gate for us by cutting a red ribbon we had fastened across it. She then led the way in, followed by all the schoolgirls and women members marching two and two, and the compound soon filled. First we had a short service round the flagstaff. Then the Prefect himself hoisted our Red Cross flag, to the great interest of the people, and fire-crackers were set off, and a Chinese band amused us with its unmelodious sounds. After this we were photographed, and then our lady opened the front



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door, and led everybody through the buildings. The wards were gay with Gospel pictures and presentation scrolls which the Chinese had given us, and everything was bright and shining. When every one had seen over the place, tea was provided in several of the rooms, and it was a great pleasure to see one room almost filled with old patients, some of whom had come many miles 'to wish us happiness,' and were the brightest-faced of all that day.

"The great pleasure to us all was that the Hospital was opened free of debt. It has cost £600, and the money has come to us wonderfully. At this time last year, when we first began to make plans for a Hospital, I had only a nest-egg of £50 in the Bank. Then came Mr. David Brown's splendid gift which started us building; then the Broughshane £100 and the Crumlin Road Church £25. The Chinese themselves subscribed over £70, and the remainder has been sent to me by many friends. My Chinese assistants and the great company of the sick and poor join me in very heartiest thanks to you all." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A quaint expression of gratitude to the Doctor is given in the following letter of the clever young evangelist, whose wife had been carefully tended in the Hospital:—

"DEAR DR. MITCHELL,

"Many thanks for I received your letter in yesterday afternoon, and also know her illness is better now, I am very glad of



## DREAMS COMING TRUE

*"October, 1909.*

"Elder Shang told me he thought the function was just splendid. I was surprised, and I am very glad, for it was for the Chinese I wanted it. For us it was too big a fuss somehow, and I was distressed by the awful crowds who would come in front at the speeches and would not keep quiet. I feel yet as if it were all a dream. The patients are in continual wonder at the bright cheery rooms. I tell them often of all the kind friends at home who have helped, and of how some of them have to work hard for their living, and how some of them are poor and yet all are willing to send their bricks, because they belong to the Christ, who said, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.' Indeed I am in continual wonder myself as I look at the Hospital, for it is just three years ago since we started our first Dispensary in two tiny rooms with no place for in-patients, and from that little beginning has come this beautiful spacious building. You will never

it. I wish the Lord help you and have a mysterious medicated her illness and can get well. Write letter to me and give the medicine, these laborious, and wait another day I return to Fakumen to thanksgiving you. I hope she can strength, her illness quick better and slow, that is never mind.

"Yours truly,  
"LIU CHING WEN."



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quite know how much you have all helped, and what it will mean, I hope, in years to come to many a suffering woman and child here. It does not seem fair that I should have all the joy of the work and the pleasure of their thanks. I know you will remember us in your prayers. Some of the patients are turning from their heathen darkness to the light of Christ, and these you will surely meet some day and know, and then you will feel more than rewarded for all, for it must have meant sacrifice and thought to many."



## CHAPTER VI

### THAT GOLDEN YEAR

“ And oh, there is no distance ! Far or near,  
Our spirits hold communion : you are here,  
And I am with you, Dear.

And all the beauty of God’s earth and skies  
Wears some new charm, not known in any wise,  
Save only to our eyes.”

I. D. M. to her Mother.

“ FAKUMEN, *January*, 1910.

“ Do you see the 1910 ? It gives me a nice shiver whenever I write it, the magic year ! <sup>1</sup> I was counting up the coming blessings as well as the past ones, and I hope a sight of all your faces will be amongst its good things. And now we come to a most unheard-of and wonderful letter. Did you ever hear of such a thing as St. John’s Church, Glasgow, doing this for my Hospital and sending it with their best wishes ? I have been fairly crazy with delight, most of all because of their thinking

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mitchell’s furlough was due in October, 1910.



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of such a gift for me. Then all the trouble and the kindness, and above and beyond all, here is over £30 for me to spend. I want such heaps of things, but I have decided to buy an organ for the wards. What has rhymed in my head ever since is just this,—‘Far above all that ye ask or think.’ We asked and thought of the Hospital free of debt, but this is the ‘exceeding abundantly above all’ that we asked or thought. That is just going to be my New Year’s desire to carry down through all the days, ‘Above all—above all that ye ask or think.’ The five years have not been what I meant them to be. I wish I could begin all over again, for I have just blundered through. And yet some sides of the work have been so good and, in spite of all the failures, there stands the lovely Hospital, and when I think of that side, I just lift up my heart and rejoice.”

“15 *March*, 1910.

“The weeks are flying and here are the Ides of March already. You sent your love to ‘all the brave wee colony,’ and that makes us all feel like horrible frauds. You are coming nearer and nearer and your faces loom out larger every day. I have sometimes felt as if you were thirty millions of miles



## THAT GOLDEN YEAR

away like the comet, but the months are rushing me towards you now, and you will soon be visible to the naked eye without the use of the telescope of imagination. This week has gone in a flash. We handseled our new Operating Theatre on Thursday, and I felt as if I could go on all day working in that lovely sunny room. It is such a treat to see properly, and every nerve and artery and muscle stand out so plainly I could not miss them if I tried. I wonder how I ever managed at all in that other wee hole. And even the Dispensary, where we have operated since we moved, is nothing to this new room. Then when we are done, the double doors are thrown open and the patient is trundled along on the big new castors to her place on the kang. It is like a play to the girls and a change from the old heavy half-door that we lugged so often up and down that compound, breaking our backs over heavy women. We have three wards going now, two medical and a surgical. The surgical is the big one, and we have our four patchwork quilts all in use, and wish we had a dozen more. It is just going to take me every minute of every day now for the spring months. I begin sharp at nine, but I do not feel as if anything would ever be a trouble



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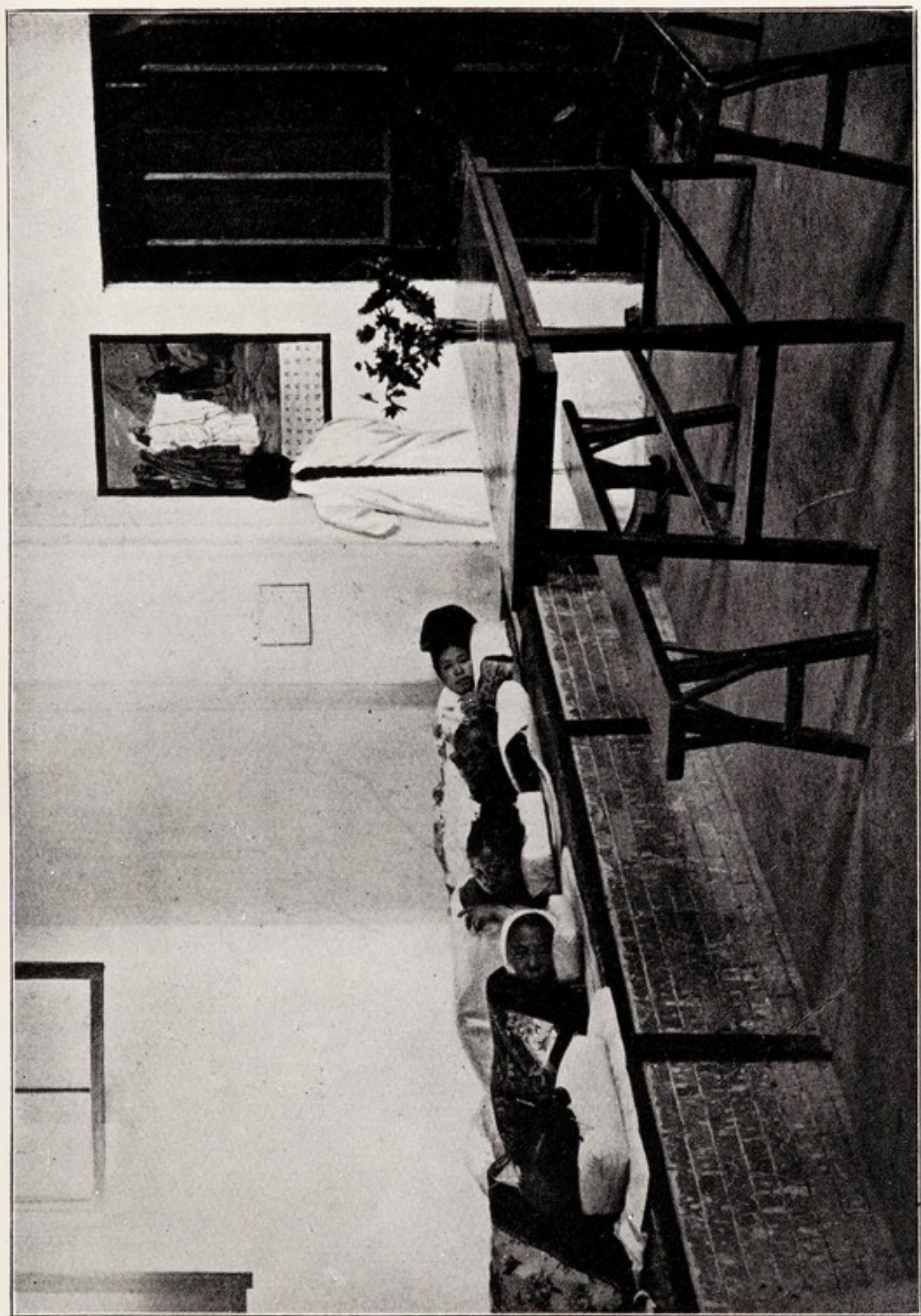
again. It seems almost impossible to leave them, but I am holding on to October with both hands, and I shall just catch on to the tail of that comet, if I can do nothing else, to be whisked right home to you all.

“The golden year, the year I am to be at home! Oh! the thought of it is just like wine these busy days. My days just follow so fast upon one another, I can hardly keep up with them. The only intervals seem to be deep, long dreamless sleeps, which begin when I get my head on the pillow and stop with difficulty when my shutters are opened in the morning.

“My friend, the rich Mrs. Bai, who came to give up opium, is better now and quite cheerful. The dispensers had prayed for her every Sunday evening and I think that helped to bring her back. This makes our seventh opium cure this spring, and two more are coming as soon as we have room, but they do take it out of one for the few fierce days when they are bad.

“We breakfast at seven now and it is the nicest time of all the day. I had two operations done and patients back to bed by ten o'clock this morning, the kind that make me feel inclined to pat myself on the back and





INSIDE THE MAIN WARD.  
Five patients are on the kang.







## THAT GOLDEN YEAR

say, 'Bravo,'—until the next time when I 'come a cropper' and want to put my head in a bag with shame. The big ward was hardly finished until it was packed full. The wee girl is in Pat's Cot, so comfy and cool between white sheets and nothing to pay while she lies in that bed. At our last Communion Service quite a number were baptised as fruits of our work. Mr. and Mrs. Hsu, who gave up opium last year, were baptised with their children, also our first amputation case and some others. It was so encouraging. I think a good deal is the fruit of the Revival."

October came at last. Doctor Ida<sup>1</sup> flew back to the "long-loved home that it was hard to leave." But the "golden year" turned out to have a deeper meaning than she had pictured, not the gold of happiness, but of suffering. The five years of strenuous toil in an alien environment had overtaxed her strength. Made of iron though her frail body sometimes seemed to be, her tireless spirit had unconsciously driven her beyond the limit of her physical powers. For months she

<sup>1</sup> This, her baby brother's first attempt at "Isabel," was the name in familiar use amongst her friends.



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was ill, though the exact nature of her illness was obscure.

For the Annual Meeting of the Women's Association for Foreign Missions of the Irish Presbyterian Church, in June, 1911, she rose from her sick bed to address the large gathering in the Assembly Hall, Belfast. How she did it, no one knows. No persuasion would hold her back from going. With her large shining eyes and pallid face, she stood dressed in white, an unforgettable figure. She herself afterwards admitted that she saw no one.

The following brief account is taken from *Woman's Work* :—

“During the most beautiful and touching address given by Dr. Isabel Mitchell, few eyes were dry. She told us how in one village she knows of a band of two hundred enquirers, men and women, who have learned a little about God, meeting together regularly to pray that a missionary may be sent to teach them more. They are only one instance of many similar. With the present staff of missionaries it is impossible to go to them and to all those who are calling for us. We have long ago ceased to speak of closed doors in China ; the walls have fallen down, and the land lies open. The cry is louder and more insistent



## THAT GOLDEN YEAR

now than ever before in the history of the Chinese—the cry from Manchuria—‘*Come over and help us.*’

“In her charming way she went on to give a most vivid picture of Fakumen and its busy life, and of the one little Christian Hospital bringing help and healing to hundreds of sick women and children. She told of the joyful opening day, when the words were sung, ‘There is a gate stands open wide,’ and she prayed that none might ever come to the green gate in vain. And now, when the Doctor has come home, the gate is shut.”

During the autumn she grew worse. Her friends feared she would never again set foot in the Far East. In the early part of 1912 she underwent an operation in Glasgow, whither she had gone to be near some of her old friends of College days. Slowly, very slowly, she began to make progress. If any one knew what it meant to suffer agony, Dr. Mitchell did. It was at this time that she saw again her friend of the old days in Manchester, the Rev. A. Herbert Gray, M.A., who was always one of her heroes. His impression of that visit is recorded in the fine tribute to her memory written by him to her Mother four years later.



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“ I am very glad,” he writes, “ to hear that some account of your daughter’s true, devoted life is going to be published. To know her in life was a real inspiration, and it is sure to help others even to know about her. I remember very well the work she did in Manchester when she worked at the Chorlton-on-Medlock Dispensary. She seemed to me to put Christian devotion into everything she did, and always she carried with her a cheerful and helpful spirit. She had an attitude towards the poor among her patients, which particularly impressed me. Many people spoil their acts of kindness by adopting a patronising air, but your daughter seemed truly to feel that these poor folks were just brothers and sisters in distress, and her interest in them was genuine and spontaneous. She became a member of my congregation (Grosvenor Square Presbyterian Church), and our fellowship was truly enriched by her presence among us. She was of those who really have but one interest in life—namely, to serve others in the name of Christ, and many of us felt how poor and unworthy our lives were when compared with hers. It was inevitable that she should choose some such career as that of a Foreign Missionary.



## THAT GOLDEN YEAR

Nothing less thorough-going could possibly have satisfied her.

“ After she had gone to China I heard of her from time to time through a friend, and when she came home and was suffering through an illness I saw her in a nursing home in Glasgow. I remember that visit particularly well. It was plain that she had suffered a great deal both in body and mind. Yet she had done it all with great patience and quiet courage. I think she was tempted to give way to depression. Yet she would not. Her one great concern was to get back to her work in China, and if she found her trial hard to bear, it was just because it kept her from her work.

“ The news of her death was a great shock to us, for the world can ill spare such women as she. But the work she was doing must be still going on. Such a character wields an immense influence and I know there are people who find it easier to believe in God and easier to struggle after fidelity, because of Ida Mitchell. Even death cannot quench such a spirit—she lives on in the hearts of those who knew her, and she was of those whose work abides. I am very thankful to have known her ; and I feel that even for you, who



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feel her loss most intensely, it must be a wonderful consolation to know that God had made her into a great woman even before He took her away from us."

The sun came out again through the clouds. Her bodily strength revived. In the autumn of 1912, to the surprise of many and to her own delight, she received medical permission to return to China. As she put it at the Farewell Meeting in Fisherwick Church, Belfast: "It is not often a joy to say good-bye, but it is to-day a great joy to me to say these words to you." In October she crossed Siberia on the Russian Railway and before the end of the year arrived safely in Chinchow, Manchuria. The Hospital work here was less arduous than it had been in Fakumen. Besides, she had the great advantage of having for consultant surgeon, Mrs. Sara Keers, M.D., who tried to "teach her to hold in the reins and not exhaust all her newly-gained strength." It was the intention that, if Dr. Mitchell recovered her health completely, she should return to Fakumen in the autumn of 1913.

Doctor Ida's second lustrum now begins. Her first five years had developed her marvellous powers of heart and speech and hand.



## THAT GOLDEN YEAR

The set-back of the interlude of suffering had only served to deepen her sympathy with others in distress. The remaining years are the history of a swift fruition.

“CHINCHOW, *Chinese New Year*, 1913.

“This has been a holiday week, and we have been breathing fresh air, and having long morning walks away out to the river. It is most beautiful, with blue hills in the distance, and the woods all bare, with the broad shallow river and its plank bridge. We come home with great appetites for dinner, and I can do my five miles without fatigue, so you can imagine how well I am. You would have difficulty in finding any trace of the poor invalid of this time last year, and your tales of the rain and fog make me more thankful than I can say that you just did the right thing, and sent me out. Indeed, I feel better than I have done for almost two years, though I say it carefully, and almost under my breath, but I am convinced that it was best for me, and that I am going to be well and strong as ever, so be glad with me.

“Little did we think last year that I would be in China now, and writing to you that I am better than I have been for more than two



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years, but so it is, and how thankful we should be. I could run and skip and dance in the sunshine here. I am really a different person, and I am earning my living. Besides, I am only a fortnight away from Ireland, and can pop home at any time you want me. I should like to smell the Roman Hyacinths. Oh! do you remember my room in the Lynedoch Home<sup>1</sup> and the flowers? Never mind, I would rather be here with two yellow crocuses.

“The little Temple opposite our gate is gay with lanterns and flags and new red placards, and the bells constantly sounding, with the worshippers burning incense. The Christians are a scattered little community, and do not make much visible impression on the busy life of this city. But there are many earnest ones among them. I was thinking this week, when I was going round the people here a little, that if the home people could only realise what thousands there are still with no one working among them. They are awfully good and kind with their sewing meetings and their money, but oh! we want girls, girls, girls, to come and help. Where are the girls? But I didn't mean to give you a missionary address.

<sup>1</sup> Where she underwent her operation in Glasgow.



## THAT GOLDEN YEAR

“There is many a tragedy under the bright sky. I was going over to play the organ for evening service on Sunday with my hymn-books under my arm, when a messenger came running to say two children had fallen into a well, and though both were fished out, they thought one of them was dead. One of the dispensers and I hurried off, and a few streets away we came on the crowd, so dense they had to make a way for us through. I think I never saw so many people come out of a room as were turned out when we arrived. A dear wee girl of five lay on the kang dead, at least her pulse was just perceptible, but she was not breathing. We did artificial respiration for an hour, and tried all we could think of. The colour came back into the tiny white face for a bit, but she never breathed, and the little pulse flickered out. She is an only child, and the tragedy of it all is, some man had a spite against the mother, and threw her into the well. The little boy with whom she was playing saw him do it, and ran off, but the man caught him and threw him in too. The man is taken off to prison, but I have heard no more. It is only a little girl, so he may not suffer much, but she was such a wee pet.”



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*" May, 1913.*

" Spring is past in China, and the beginning of summer is come. Poor meagre spring, without a daisy or a buttercup and never a cluster of primroses in the moss below the hedge? I should like to be with you for a week, but I am best here, so strong and well and here is my work. But there are you all, and the primroses, and I want you sometimes. I did my first chloroform operation all by myself on Tuesday, the first for more than two years, and I just revelled and rejoiced to feel the feel of the instruments in my hands again. Do you remember how I used to dread the thought of an operation when I was at home? I really do think I shall be ready for Fakumen in September, especially if I have a good seaside holiday at Peitaiho first, and maybe I won't be glad! Chinchow is all very well, but oh, my own dear Hospital! We have had some awful dust storms. The dust has to be brushed with brush and pan from the window sills, and you could plant potatoes in the empty bedrooms, but this morning we wakened to blessed rain. Oh! the feel of it, I went out and got my face wet. The green is coming very slowly, just a green blush, if one can say such a thing, on the banks



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and trees, and they are ploughing in the fields. The white violets in your letter have a little perfume still. I sent off half of them, but I could not spare them all. Don't I know the warm corner where they come out first, and the old thrushes' nest under the arm of the apple tree in the wall? Do you remember the tom-tit's nest in the same wall, when Mrs. Thomasina used to spit out at us? Our Hospital women are all well. The last one, after her operation, keeps me busy doing policeman, for when I forbid her peanuts I find her at shrimps, and when she is told she cannot eat shrimps I find her at cockles. I don't know what these people wouldn't eat!"

"PEITAIHO, *August, 1913.*

"It is the last night in this dear little cottage by the sea, and I am all alone. What a lovely holiday it has been! Five weeks without a worry or cloud of any kind, and I have built up a store of health and a whole mansion of happy memories, and if I don't go back for a good hard happy healthful year's work after all this, I shall be an ungrateful wretch.

"The treat of all was the Communion Service at the end, with Dr. Goodrich in the



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chair at the Table, and four ordained Elders from different Missions, three of them doctors, helping him. His voice broke as he welcomed us all to the Lord's Table, all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. It was truly a wonderful sight to see Bishop Bashford in the front seat, and Baptists and Methodists and Episcopalians and Presbyterians and Congregationalists and I don't know what all, sitting side by side. The reverence and awe, and the setting sun over the packed congregation, and the shining face of the old man, we shall never forget. Altogether it has cured me, and I am like what I was five or six years ago, and no invalid left at all."

"MOUKDEN, *September, 1913.*

"I had a pleasant morning in Mrs. Turley's Blind School. It did my heart good to see all the clean tidy girls, with their big aprons and knitting in their pockets, sitting in the sunshine under the trees in a little compound full of flowers, all quite blind, but their work is very good. We walked out one afternoon and saw Dr. Jackson's<sup>1</sup> grave. I was glad to see it.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Arthur Jackson, who lost his life fighting the plague at Moukden, 1911.



## THAT GOLDEN YEAR

"The Irish Council gave me a clap to-day because I was so strong and well again, and told me I am to go back to Fakumen. You will be glad, and as for me, I hold the cup of happiness with almost a trembling hand, it is so full. For a long time the fates hung in the balance as to whether Chinchow or Fakumen Hospital should be closed. In the end they decided to send me back now, and Dr. Sara Keers is to keep Chinchow open. We look on the decisions of Council as the guiding hand of God for us. It is guiding me back to Fakumen, and how grateful and thankful should I be, and indeed I am."

"FAKUMEN, *October, 1913.*

"Here I am at last. I can hardly believe it is three years since I was here, as I seem to have lived half of my lifetime since then. On the way from Tieling it was glorious and fresh crossing the old river. As the day went on, however, the south wind rose, and the dust storms, and we had a tiring day. I have lost my old knack of sitting in an uncomfortable cart. I was cart-sick, a horrible experience almost as bad as sea-sickness. I knew deep down that I was very glad to see the old hills and the old road, and gladdest of all to see



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Sally and the two wee boys and Annie,<sup>1</sup> who, with all the schoolgirls and my Hospital dispensers, were out along the road to meet me. I said 'Ping-an' (Peace) to them all and escaped to my bed!"

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. O'Neill.



## CHAPTER VII

### FINDING THE FLOWERS

1914, 1915

“ An eager look in two little eyes,  
That makes me long to be better ;  
An answer sweet from childish lips,  
To break my selfish fetter.

“ For this, to-day's fair portion, Lord,  
I give thee thanks to-night,  
For the love of a child's pure heart is one  
Of the Father's blessings bright.”

I. D. M.

“ FAKUMEN, *March*, 1914.

“ Yesterday we had the closing meeting of the Dorcas Society. We have only had four Wednesdays, but when the Christian women came more than twenty strong each time, they soon sewed up all the clothes and cotton-wool we could afford to buy for them. As the last quilts and sheets were finished, the women came into our vacant room and viewed the big press, made out of the enormous pack-



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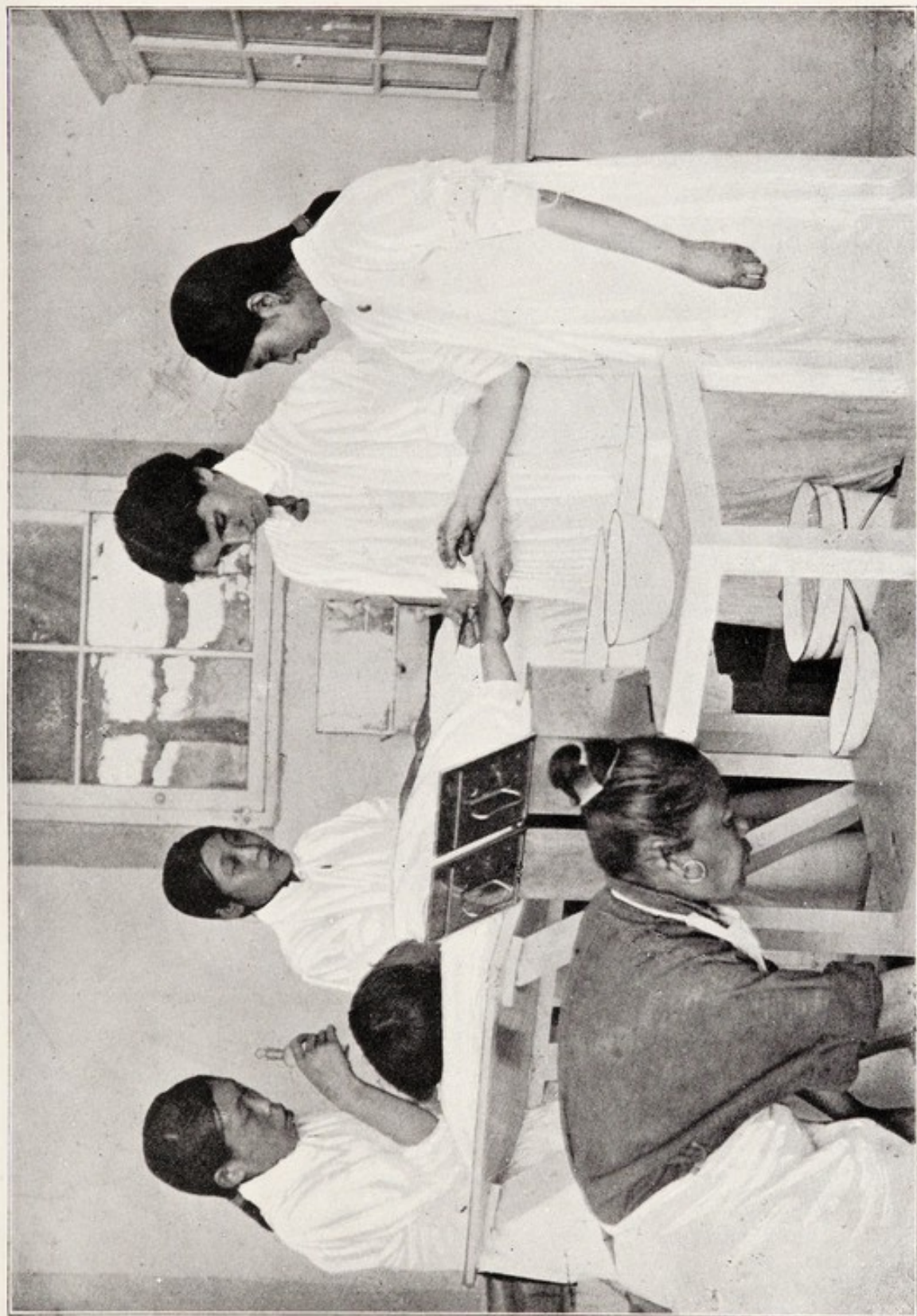
ing case that precious young man in the Medical Supply put the steriliser in, and they were all very pleased with the result of their work—fourteen mattresses, fourteen wadded quilts, fourteen sheets, and towels without number.

“The six girl dispensers are all working together very cheerfully and well these days, and the additional helpers make all the difference in the world to me. I am not nearly so rushed as I used to be. We have apportioned out all the work. One looks after the bedding, and one looks after the instruments, and one the dressings and bandages. I am now trying more to administrate, a thing that I am no good in the world at, but more and more I long for a nurse, to teach them how to nurse, and how to keep the Hospital clean and tidy.”

“*April, 1914.*”

“The best news of all the week was our Easter Service with the children. It had said in our S.S. books that the Sunday School room should be all decorated with plants and flowers, the piano banked with palms, and the prevailing scheme all green and white, with a touch of gold! I smole a little smile at the thought of our room in poor wee Fakumen,





IN THE OPERATING ROOM.

The three dispensers (left to right) are Miss Shang, Miss Li (Shining Cloud), and Miss Jang.







## FINDING THE FLOWERS

but then we buckled to, to see what we could do. The class on Friday night turned itself into a decoration committee after the lessons were prepared, and they made a beautiful text on a great piece of green poplin (the same as in the Church curtain), just the three characters, 'He is risen' (gold paper bought in town for twopence a sheet). Then they covered two collection baskets with green crinkled paper and white frilly insides, and four little maidens were told off to ring four little brass bells, with long green and white streamers to each. A big table was set in front with two pots of white geraniums in full flower, and a glorious pot of white marguerites, and a pot of pansies with golden hearts. Really, I was amazed at how nice it looked. And if all the decorations in America gave as much pleasure as our 'green and white with a touch of gold,' they did well. And when I tell you it was held in the big room of the new Girls' School, with the sun streaming through the windows on all the dear wee faces, then you can imagine what a bright and happy time it was. We all marched down to Church, seventy-five small girls and eleven teachers, each with her own little flock. We joined Martha's class on the way, and were



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about one hundred strong. Every little child had a white paper flower pinned on. This was a surprise for me, for I had told them how all the children at home could have white flowers on Easter Day, and they hurried up on Saturday and made these to surprise me. We carried our text and our flowers and our collection baskets full of pennies, and two little maidens put them on the Communion Table in Church. I think sometimes of what Campbell Brown says in his book, 'Children of China,' that coming to know the children of a land is like finding the flowers, when you thought all was bare hillside and dusty road. Certainly these wee pets are the flowers for me, and I just look forward to Sunday and to Friday night's preparation class as I do to nothing else. You must not think I am over-working. I am very careful, and I have not had one day's sickness since I came back to Fakumen, so I am making up the year's accounts with a very thankful heart, and I should like to put in £100 for a thank-offering. The work is heavy, and I cannot do it as it ought to be done, but we do the best we can in the circumstances. We reached high-water mark with eighty-seven patients yesterday, but my kind little helper, Shining Cloud, came



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in when I was about quarter through and said she had asked two of them to do the dispensing for her, and could she help me, as she was afraid I would be too tired ! Between us we finished them at two o'clock, so you see they take care of me, and are good to the old Doctor."

" *May, 1914.*

" On Sunday I was sitting outside with the patients hearing them read and say their hymns. They were laughing over trying to remember the words, and were not thinking of the sense. So I started to tell them about Christ giving His life. They were so eager that I went on and on, and then one woman said :—' We heard about Jesus in Mongolia, but they all said there, " How can they worship a God that was killed and nailed to a cross ? " I never understood before that He was willing to be killed just to save us.' Oh, it is so seldom they really take in anything, that it was a great pleasure to go on talking to them.

" I had nice Dr. Hsu<sup>1</sup> over for a consultation again yesterday. I like him better each

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Hsu, the Christian doctor in charge of the Fakumen Public Hospital, is a graduate of the Union Medical College, Peking. The Public Hospital is supported from local taxes, under the authority of the Prefect.



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time he comes. Oh, if China were to have Christian doctors of her own, what an advance it would be! I have a little thought concocting in my brain. Do you think, if I could find a girl suitable to go to Peking and study medicine, that between us we might procure the means for her support? If we give her training, she must promise to give her services to the Hospital when she is qualified."

*" August, 1914.*

"It was strange to read your peaceful letter, when all has been so much changed since, and just a week after, you were into war, war, war."

*" September, 1914.*

"Home letters have ceased coming. I cannot tell you how much I miss them. The weeks seem so long and dreary when no postman appears."

*" November, 1914.*

"The last letter nearly made my heart stand still with the news of the possibility of our boy<sup>1</sup> going to France, but when I thought of it—that sad, sweet work of helping souls in need—I thought it was not right to grudge

<sup>1</sup> Capt. the Rev. David R. Mitchell, Chaplain to the Ulster Division, B.E.F., France.



## FINDING THE FLOWERS

him to go. If it was I, I should be off like a shot! Indeed, every day as I am working with the Chinese in Hospital, I wish I could do the same for some of our poor wounded men.

“ I think I never had a nicer letter than the one that was waiting for me when I came back in the twilight last night. I was out for a lonely walk, and feeling a bit blue somehow. I was thinking I was now thirty-five, over age to go to the Front, and yet it seemed as if I hadn't begun to do any decent work here yet, but was always meaning to begin something worth while. Then I had a funny experience, for I crossed a stream on the road, and going up the frozen bank on the other side, I fell flat on my face and gave myself a terrible bruise, a thing I suppose I have not done for years, not since I was a toddler. It was a really bad knock, and I felt stunned. Then I found my glove was covered with blood, and I thought I must look a pretty sight. So I scrambled up and sat by the roadside under the new moon until I felt able to move on. I cleaned myself up as best I might, and made my way home, ashamed at the thought of my tripping like a baby, and dreading to be seen by any one. I came in a bit depressed, and found that



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letter about the great meeting of the Girls' Auxiliary.<sup>1</sup> Then, in one moment, I was at home again, and going in with the crowd of girls to the Assembly Hall, and looking at six hundred of them—six hundred in a quiet meeting—and listening to them clapping, and seeing them stand up as the names of the Churches were called. And they said they were going to send an account of it to me! Are they gone daft? I'm only an old bundle of a woman in an old fur coat, with a bleeding face, coming home in the lonely dusk. What have I to do with six hundred bright, pretty girls? But they have done well. I am proud of them, and very very proud that they should have remembered me.

“We had a very nice Baptism Service when Pastor Wang was here. Six from our Sunday School—two young teachers and four scholars—were among those baptised, so we were very happy. They are gathering in, gathering in, and our hearts are glad.”

“*March, 1915.*”

“Our long-looked-for meetings have come to pass. Mr. Macnaughtan<sup>2</sup> arrived through

<sup>1</sup> The Girls' Auxiliary for Foreign Missions of the Irish Church took its rise in part through Dr. Mitchell when on furlough.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. Macnaughtan, M.A., U.F. Church of Scotland Mission, Moukden.



## FINDING THE FLOWERS

seas of mud and water. We had seriously thought of sending him a wire to say that meetings would be an impossibility owing to the state of the roads, and our hearts were thinking of departing down into our boots. Then we thought out a plan and hired two carts by the day for Sunday. They took all the women in cart-loads from these compounds, and came back for the children. I went round in one of the carts myself, and gathered up several loads from the houses of more distant members. The Church was full, a splendid turn-out of women, and even better of men. Best of all was Children's Day. We had a hundred little maidens on our side when the service began, and many came in afterwards, until they had to squat on the little mats on the floor in front, and indeed wherever they could find a corner. The boys I could not count. I played the organ for the first hymn, and really to hear the burst of 'Around the Throne of God in Heaven thousands of children stand,'—or as it is in the Chinese translation, 'Children without number,'—was inspiring. Mr. Macnaughtan kept them going for more than half an hour with two candles, and, 'Ye are the light of the world.' At the end it became very solemn,



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and even the restless infants sat still, as he asked them to follow Jesus.

“To-day was my tuberculosis day at our local Women’s Conference, and indeed I was in fear and trembling, but I had some charts which my little dispenser and I had made out together, and some diagrams, and, with a blackboard to illustrate, it was not so bad after all. I want to fight tuberculosis. It killed two millions in China last year, and I want the girls to help me to fight it.

“On Thursday night we had a magic lantern lecture in the Girls’ School on “Prevention and Cure of Tuberculosis.” Dr. Hsu gave it, and it was just splendid. Do you not think we are becoming very advanced? I was afraid some of his points might be different from mine, but they were not; indeed, a great deal of it was repetition, only much fuller, and of course much better put, in faultless Chinese, and the slides were a great success. I am very keen on Preventive Medicine, as you know, and I want to enthuse Dr. Hsu too. I think our Christian homes ought to set an example of cleanliness, but oh! if you saw some of them. Mrs. Hunter went to visit one sick woman, and was met by a big black pig



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walking out as she walked in. She called it the 'Negro Butler.'

"I am just in from a terrible tramp in the mud round some of the homes. I went to the boot-maker's, where I go through the shop to a small room where the accounts are kept, and through that to a dark back room where seven young boys sit on seven low stools on the kang, and work by the dim light that filters through one little back window, which is all paper; through this room into a further back, darker room, which is the living-room of the family (eight children and not room to turn); through the living-room into a still further, darker little room, where are the mother and the baby I have come to see. Not one chink open to let in air in the whole filthy suite. We surely do need a Sanitary Board in Fakumen. Four of the eight are coming to Sunday School, but I should like to open their windows better than anything."

*"April, 1915.*

"To-night I have been putting a teapot and a kettle and a tin of milk into a basket and gathering together tracts and pictures (the box of medicine was prepared yesterday), and to-morrow morning Shining Cloud and I



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start on our little three days' outing. Not far away, just twelve miles over the hills to a village where we have lots of old patients to see, and where we hope to find some new ones. The Hospital patients will be quite safe in the head dispenser's good care until we return."

*" Later.*

" We had a beautiful mountain road, and many mud holes in the valleys. Passing through one village our cart completely overturned. We were out walking on a dry side-path at the time, happily, and the cart was not much the worse, only one window was broken. In the afternoon we came on the Elder coming to see what had become of us. They had made great preparations, and we were placarded in all the neighbouring villages by the vigorous Elder, and halt and lame and blind had been in from long distances waiting for us. We had to begin to see them before we even drank a cup of tea, as some were anxious to return home to their village that night. Shining Cloud and I had the Elder's little room to ourselves, and slept on one kang. Such a hard kang! I am not hardened to travelling like Miss Mac. We rose with daylight, and breakfast was over



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by six o'clock. The Elder had prepared a great white flag with a red cross, and this was strung up on a pole at the gate. The people began to arrive early, and before eight o'clock we had a packed Chapel. The Elder led them in morning worship, and then I saw them one by one in our room. We had well over sixty that morning, and had to tell the rest to come next day. Then I peeled potatoes and made myself a great stew. Our meals were quite a picnic. Poor Shining Cloud took sick, as she is not used to carts and roughing it, but I was splendid the whole time. I went visiting in the afternoon some patients who could not rise, and in each house there was a very attentive audience to hear the Gospel story. Then the Christian women all gathered in for worship just before dark. Next day was a repetition, only that we had over eighty in the morning, and the Elder kept order outside, and wrote slips with numbers for them, and made them come in in order. After we had finished with the patients, and nearly finished ourselves into the bargain, we tried to have a little rest on the kang, but the people kept coming and coming, until at last I escaped out, and went over the back wall into a quiet stretch of country and a sudden



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peace. Mrs. Wang of next door was at the back gate of their stackyard and took me in and showed me her garden and fruit trees. Then she made me rest in her big cool room and said if any one came to look for me, she would hide me in the cupboard. She was rather a disagreeable old lady this, the day before, but we are good friends now. Later in the afternoon young Mrs. Wang and I went in our cart to a village a mile away, where we visited a number of old patients, and received a very warm welcome. Mrs. Wang spoke to the crowd, too, and relieved me, as we had left Shining Cloud at home to rest. Next morning ten old patients came from this village to morning worship. Shining Cloud had recovered and had a splendid Sunday School of the village mites. We had Sunday dinner in the Wangs', and in the afternoon visited the Christians in the village. Our evening worship that day was the best of all, as we told them about the Hospital and the Dorcas Society and the people at home who helped us. Altogether it was a real little treat and we were sorry to say goodbye to them. They have few helps and are apt to grow very careless in the heathen villages.

“ We had a visit from a strange-looking



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individual last Sunday morning, just as we were coming along to 7.30 breakfast. He was a Japanese with a little black beard and whiskers, and was dressed in a black frock coat and rode a bicycle and wore no hat. He could speak no English and only a word or two of Chinese, so we were a caricature party, if only you could have seen us! He made me laugh too, for he was so exactly like Professor ——. He wanted me to give him something, I thought, and I couldn't make out what it was. Was it medicine? He didn't know what medicine was in English, French or Chinese. Finally (with appropriate gestures),—Was it something to eat? It was his turn to laugh then. 'Oh, no!' Then a paper and a pencil, and in Chinese he wrote, 'The Church.' The poor man wanted to know the way to Church, as it was Sunday. After giving him some tea we sent him off with a sigh of relief.

“A letter came last night with the heavy news of Mrs. Weir's <sup>1</sup> death. It has been a shock to us all. She was so interested in everything that this was most unexpected. She gave her life for the Chinese just as surely as Dr. Jackson or any one else, and what a

<sup>1</sup> Wife of the Rev. A. Weir, B.A., Kuyushu.



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weary time of sickness she has borne. It is our first death of any but children since I came out, and for Eva it is all joy, but we are very sad at heart."

*"June, 1915.*

"The first of June—leafy June! Our fruit trees are lovely, and all the little seeds are coming up in the beds so fresh and green. 'Oh! welcome, gentle summer, it is joy when thou art near.' Our great event this week was the Temple Festival. This was the Women's Festival and all Miss Mac's old ladies from the Women's School and some of the Church women went up in a band to preach and sell Gospels and books. I went with the first batch; breakfast at six, and away up the Temple Hill by 8 a.m. on the most glorious of mornings. All the town was there, and we joined little groups of women as we went along. The crowd was not too dense when we reached the Temple, and our little band of ten divided into five pairs and each pair found a shady position where they spread big Gospel pictures on the ground, and arranged their bright books alongside. Mrs. Jang and I established ourselves beside a tent where the children were having their heads shaved. In front of us was an old man, who invited



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us to have a quiet seat on the grass beside him. We had a crowd in no time, of course, and we spoke to them turn about, and had quite a brisk sale for the books. I went round at intervals and visited the other pairs of women, for I found that whenever I stood for a while, the crowd always gathered. The place became so packed with people that we could hardly move about, and although Miss Mac came up at about nine o'clock, I never saw her at all. The women were as busy as could be, offering cakes, and burning the dolls, and great paper lanterns, and rushing about with bundles of flaming incense, until I was sure some one's clothes would be set on fire in the crowd. I watched a nice young woman come up the long flight of stone steps and go right down on her knees, and knock her forehead on every second step, and on into the shrine. I was sure she would be trampled on, the crowd was so great, but she never looked to right or left. They said it must be either her father-in-law or mother-in-law or a child very seriously ill. Indeed, it is terrible to see them, so earnest, and I know they are seeking and are really worshipping, but oh, so blind, so blind! I was sorry to find that I wasn't any good at all at preaching. I was glad to come

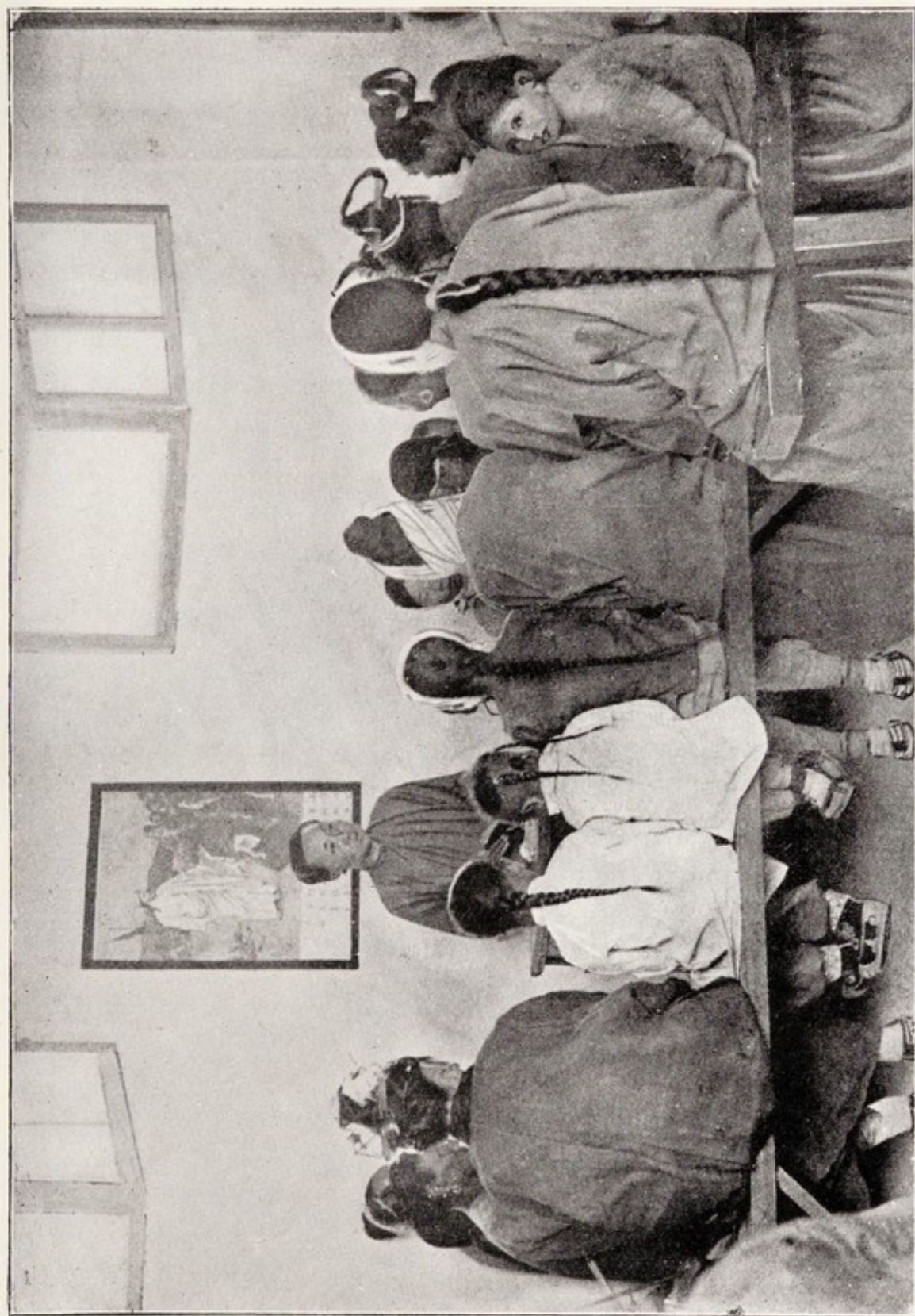


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down to Hospital, and the cool waiting-room seemed so quiet after the bustle, though we think it noisy enough often. I think the everyday quiet humdrum work is the best after all.

“Now to our little corner of the world. I have been planning for two years to have a meeting of Elders and Deacons to see the Hospital and Dorcas Society and all the work. So I just buckled up and did it. The Chapel people wrote me out red paper invitations for thirty-five or so of the worthies, and they came in full force at one o'clock in the afternoon, the hour named. The Hospital was shining from top to toe, as the girls had worked well. The patients all had had an extra bath, and were in spotless sheets, and twelve new quilts of Miss Ross's were out for the occasion, so we were brilliant. Tea, and especially baked cakes, were in the Dispensary on a long table. The first arrivals were Dr. Hsu and his six dispensers from the Public Hospital. They were very early, and my girls were too shy to give them tea, and all ran away and hid in the next room. So I had to entertain the young men, all in long white coats, until the Dorcas Society old ladies arrived in force, and the tea-makers came out again. As the





THE WAITING ROOM.

The Biblewoman instructing patients.







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batches finished tea they moved into the meeting room. Dr. Hsu was in the chair, beautifully dressed in his dark silk clothes, and we could not have had a more sympathetic chairman. He is a real Chinese gentleman, an earnest Christian and a keen doctor; and the combination is excellent. We had many complimentary speeches from the visitors, and they gave us a big paper scroll with all their names written on it, in true Chinese fashion, as a little memento of the day. Dr. Hsu and his young men thoroughly enjoyed their walk around the Hospital, seeing the instruments and everything, but I think the old Elders and Deacons enjoyed their walk round even more. They had never been in an Operating Room, so I showed them chloroform and lancets and sterilisers and everything I could think of, to make their hair stand on end. Altogether it was very pleasant for everybody. I went to bed with a sick headache afterwards, but I am all right to-day."

*" Later.*

" My opium lady has been giving me great trouble, but is better. She has been in a fortnight to-day. I would rather work with a hundred of the poor folk than one grandee,



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and yet she is in as sore need as they are. We are full in Hospital, every corner, even a family in the wash-house. They pay five dollars a month for the privilege of having it to themselves !

“Our people are beginning to give, too. You know my senior dispenser has been giving a tenth, then a fifth, and latterly nearly a half, ever since she began to earn her wages. I counted it up for her last week, twenty-eight dollars (or £2 16s.). I could hardly believe it, and that girl began on a wage of four shillings a month. Now it is only up to nine shillings a month. My second girl has not been paying in so long, but she has up to seventeen dollars. The people who heard of these subscriptions were astonished, for girls can never give much. I think it has done them a great deal of good, as the money has been pouring in from the people since. Our ‘boy’ gave a month’s wages to be divided between Church and Hospital, and the poor coolie gave me back two dollars out of his seven, when I paid him his month’s wages.

“That was good news you sent me about the young doctor you met. Oh ! if you see her again, whisper to her that she must come. We



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want her so badly. Surely, if her home people knew the great great need and the happy full life we have here, they could not keep her back. We had nearly given up hope of a new doctor. I think I must just mention to a few people the possibility of one coming, and we shall hope on and pray.

“I just can’t love these children enough. I really do not know how I ever existed in Fakumen, before I took them in hand. There used to be fewer, but now that there are over a hundred, it is a hundred times as nice.”

“*July, 1915.*

“When I have all the poor sick things settled up for the night, I put them far from me, and go off on voyages in the great universe with Mark Rutherford and Pat McCarty—though he is not much ‘universe,’ he is just Antrim. Before bed I read a chapter in Dr. Horton’s ‘My Belief.’ I have not had such time for reading for a long long while. To-night I am not exactly in the dumps, but I might be, if I was not writing to you, for wee Baby Dermot has quite a touch of dysentery, with his temperature 101°, and his Mammy away in Moukden nursing his Daddy who is down with fever. I don’t want to worry her, but I would



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rather she was at home. It is only to-day, and I hope he will be better in the morning.”<sup>1</sup>

“ *September, 1915.*

“ On my return journey from Chefoo, I had an unspeakable night on the wretched little boat to Dairen. First, trying to sleep on a long chair on deck, as I had three German ladies in my cabin, and though I was not afraid of their shooting me, I was shy of the closed port-holes and the bad air. However, deck-chair and pillows and rugs and another chair and myself were all blown bodily across the deck when the storm rose, and we banged right into the captain’s door. He came out to see what was wrong. So I thought it was time to go downstairs and share my fate with the enemy. Well, the enemy, all three, and myself, had a lively night, and no time to think of our native lands, and when weary morning dawned, they landed the four pea-green ladies on some sea-weed rocks outside Dairen harbour, and we had to make the best

<sup>1</sup> From *Woman’s Work*:—“The parents were telegraphed for and arrived home to find little Dermot dying. All Dr. Isabel Mitchell’s skill and devoted care could not save the precious life. He went to be with Jesus and with his little brother Pat in the better world. He adds one more to the number of children whom our missionaries have lost in the unhealthy conditions of a heathen country.”



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of our way to the station. It is a fourteen-hour run to Tieling. Next day I started on a most glorious morning, and walked far on among the harvest fields. But alas! the sky covered over, and then thunder and rain, rain, rain. It never ceased, and the roads grew worse and worse. Then in sight of Fakumen it thought it would give us a taste of what it really could do, and the heavens opened and the floods descended. I had the curtain down and an umbrella up, inside the cart, but it was of no use. I soon found I was sitting in a pool. The water was washing right through the cart. I was in great anxiety as to whether we should ever reach home. I put down the umbrella and looked out. We were at a place at which three raging torrents of brown water rushed down where three roads should be, and met in a whirlpool. My old carter, long since soaked to the skin, walked in to see how deep it was. It was above his waist, but he came out and said, 'Not deep,' and jumped on the shaft and whipped the mules right into the angry waters. I really did think it was the end of us all, and even yet hardly know how the mules kept their feet, but somehow we mounted the other bank. After that we came down the little back road,



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with water up to its high banks on both sides like a canal, and when I came near home, there was a crowd at the Hospital gate, for some one had called, 'Come and see a cart making its way through the flood, with only the mules' heads above water.' Ah, these journeys! I have forgotten it all now, and a change of clothes and a hot supper were all I needed, but I wonder if that old carter wasn't ill.

"The little grave looked so desolate after the rain, but we are having it fixed up a little bit. I sometimes wish I could leave Fakumen, and the scene of all these disasters, but I know that is weak, and I try to be more conscientious in my study and reading, to save some more lives and not lose them. To-day my dear Shining Cloud and her husband, Evangelist Wang, have gone off to their village and I am going out next week to stay with them and help to open up a little medical work for the young wife. She is very happy, though there was a big torrent of tears at parting last night."

*"October, 1915.*

"I had a call at 1.30 a.m. to go some miles on the other side of the town. There was no cart at that wretched hour, and it was a long



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cold walk, but the stars, oh, the stars, made up for much. We saw no one moving except the sentries who challenged us every half mile or so, but the laconic answer is just, 'Doctor,' and that talisman passes us through, there and back. We were able to save a small son of a little woman who had none, so it was worth while."



CHAPTER VIII  
SO UNLIKE DEATH  
1916, 1917

“ Mine eyes have seen : my God I glorify.  
Mine eyes have seen : trust me, I would not lie.  
Nay, trust me not, my tidings prove and try.  
And you would see, come the same way as I—  
Way of white fields where the ripe sheaves we tie.  
Come ! ”

“ Nunc Dimittis,” by I. D. M.

“ FAKUMEN, *January*, 1916.

“ I enclose a letter I had from Dr. W. A. Young,<sup>1</sup> asking me to give a course of lectures in Moukden Medical College. With regret I declined the invitation. I am afraid it would need a tremendous lot of preparation for me to give lectures in the Medical College, and my courage failed me, but it was so nice to be asked. My hopes of going home on War service are fading away. Ah well, I am needed here.”

<sup>1</sup> Of the U.F. Church of Scotland Mission.



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*“ February, 1916.*

“ We can hardly realise that the O’Neills are gone to Ireland. My two dear boys<sup>1</sup> at Sunday School made me cry. Our lesson was Jacob on the long journey, and our text was, ‘ I will be with thee,’ and we gave it as a special text to our two wee men, who stood up bravely and gave the School a farewell bow, and then walked round and shook hands with every teacher. There was a little special prayer for them, too, by Denis’s own teacher whose voice was not very steady, and then they were off with a whoop and a shout, as happy as could be, while we stood round the stove, we teachers, and wondered would they ever be back. The wee boys in the evening went early to have their bath, and I found Amah with the tears running down into the bath as she washed them, for she has cared for them both since they were born. In the Manse compound in the morning was a shivering little company of women and girls with their arms round those precious boys. We all walked out the first three miles or so, with a big company of Elders and teachers, and we thought from our heart that the little group round the tall figure seemed to get closer

<sup>1</sup> Denis and Terence O’Neill.



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and closer round him as they climbed the last hill.

“Two days after, I was off myself thirty miles in a little cart to see my prospective girl for training in Peking to be a doctor. She is a daughter of Pastor Chen. As the sun was setting we came into Chinchiatun, a big town with a long straggling street. A side street brought us to the Church. On into a second compound, where Pastor Chen himself came out to meet us, followed by Mrs. Chen and the four Misses Chen, the second of whom is *the girl*. What a welcome they gave us, and what a pleasant three days we spent in that home ! It was my first experience of living right in a Chinese family, and they were so kind. I had brought foodstuffs with me, but alas ! they would not let me make them, and I had to live mostly on Chinese food, for they were so distressed when I wanted to make my own in the kitchen.

“And the Girl ? She is a very nice quiet girl. She was horribly shy of me at first, and no wonder. It is dreadful to be on trial, as it were, before an ancient Doctor, when you are only nineteen, but it soon wore off. You see we lived and ate and slept together, and were soon comparing the sizes of our shoes and the



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length of our hair, as there were six of us in one room. Papa went to sleep in a side house, and his smallest daughter with him. The next day it snowed hard, so we had few patients, and Miss Chen brought out all her books, and we talked. She has always wanted to learn medicine, but never had the slightest hope of it. I think she is well up in her studies, and she showed me her Physics and what not, in Chinese, at which I looked wise, and turned over the leaves, but it was hard for me to tell. At night I had a long talk with her father and mother in the study. They were anxious to know all about Peking.

‘And do you think, Doctor, a daughter of mine will ever learn all that? You know she has a very stupid mother.’

“I say she will just have to try. Then I tell them there are two more girls going from Moukden, and this cheers them greatly, to think the lonely Manchurian country girl will have company. And again, this from the mother :—

‘But I hear that the girls don’t wear trousers in Peking, they all wear skirts like the Doctor, and they say our girls look like men.’

“They are very keen for the girl to go, but hardly know how to accept the great gift for



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her education. I told Mr. Chen I was a minister's daughter myself, and well knew how difficult it was to make ends meet, and if my Father's Church hadn't helped me, I could not have studied either. I can tell you I was very thankful to find her a girl I could like, and her face at prayers the last evening, which the Pastor persuaded me to take in the little schoolroom, did me good to look at. You must all pray for her now."

*" March, 1916.*

" Did I tell you that we were trying to help on the Fakumen Public Hospital a bit, and that I was buying some instruments for Dr. Hsu ? I had a visit from him last week, so down-hearted, poor man. The Prefect here helped him, and seemed keen on pushing Western medicine forward, but—put not your trust in princes—he has gone and extended his patronage to an old Chinese quack, and they are starting a school of medicine, so-called. Only Chinese methods to be taught, no Anatomy, or Physiology, or any rubbish of that sort. They want eighty pupils, and these young men are to graduate in a year and a half ! Much easier and quicker than spending five years in Peking. Begin and make money



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straight away. Poor old China, and Dr. Hsu and I had hopes of interesting the town authorities in sanitation, and what not. The poor man thinks he will have to resign next year, if they are not more decent to him, and he is the only understanding person in this town, and I had depended on him for my next furlough time."

" *May, 1916.*

"On our way to the Branch Dispensary at Kangping we passed Wild Goose Lake, which I had not seen before. The great sheet of water with the villages dotted on the shore made me think of the Sea of Galilee, and I was beginning to name them, Capernaum, Bethsaida, and the rest, when suddenly on the hill in front a big Mongolian Buddhist Temple came into view, which dispelled all the dreams. I was most anxious to go in and see it. The old carter said they would not let us in, but as the cart passed the gate, I jumped off to see. He called to me that the dogs were fierce, but I just thought he wanted to hurry his cart on, and I made for the gate. Alack! three enormous yellow dogs came rushing out at me, and if the carter had not come with his whip and rescued me, there might have been more to tell. However, the row brought out



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an old priest, who allowed us in, with many bows, and a great smile when I asked him, in Mongolian, if he had had his food—the one and only Mongolian phrase I know. What a weird place it was ! In a back temple there is the Thousand-handed, Thousand-eyed Buddha, all arms and hands and heads, one on top of the other, with eyes everywhere. There is an inner shrine, where there is a lamp that never goes out. We were not taken in there, nor up the stair either. There is an upper storey where no woman has ever gone. Dusty, musty, and full of tattered hangings and dilapidated idols, what a place, with over seventy priests, and the temple is only open on two days in the year ! There is a fat living for them, however, for the temple lands are large.”

“*July, 1916.*

“At the Annual Mission Meetings in Moukden there was such a stir and so many folk, that this country mouse was quite bewildered by it all, and I cannot tell you with what a thankful heart I beheld again my hills of home. How I did enjoy my week ! It is the greatest delight to see all the folks once more ; and that big brilliantly lit Conference Room, with all the pretty dresses of the



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ladies, is a sight. And the keen debating of the men was a real treat to me. We had some fine nights. I was pushing the idea of Branch Dispensaries, and was much interested to see in the last *Missionary Herald* Dr. Gavin's idea of 'Physician-Evangelists' as a development of the medical work. That is my idea among the women.

"Tuesday, I was in bed with summer sickness, the result of cold, I suppose. Wednesday, patients as usual, and I struggled over in the afternoon. Thursday, I had operations, and at first I felt I could not get up in the morning, but I tried the influence of spirit over matter, and got up, and did them all in good time. I felt ever so much better. Complete victory for spirit! On Sunday afternoon I went over to my Ragged School again in West Street. They were not expecting me, and I am sorry to say the school teacher was preparing for her wedding, and her old mother was sitting on the kang spinning cord for her shoe soles. These are the things that make me feel vexed often, for they keep the Sabbath Day when *we* are present, but does that count for anything? However, I had the room cleared, and soon forty gathered in, and the old heathen put away her spinning-wheel and



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came and listened, and it was more Sunday-like."

*" September, 1916.*

" Well, my friend <sup>1</sup> has come, and we are going to have a lovely quiet month in Fakumen together, and it is such a joy to see her again. We think of going to Japan in the beginning of November. Can this be me ? "

*" October, 1916.*

" It is quite nice to have a wife ! May left on Friday. She is to open the door for the new Maternity Home in Moukden, and I am to be there too. It is Dr. Ethel Starmer's <sup>2</sup> new building, and we are all delighted about it. We of our Hospital here are subscribing clothes and bedding and quilts for six little cots. The quilts are very like our own Hospital ones, with a small red cross in the centre. The little scarlet jackets and baby clothes are entirely the girls' own, and they hope the Doctor will be pleased. Three of my girls were trained by her and they want to show their gratitude. I am grateful, too, for we have had eight midwifery cases lately, and I

<sup>1</sup> Miss May S. M'Kerrow, Dr. Mitchell's friend of college days in Glasgow, who was on a visit to Manchuria, as a deputy of the Women's Mission of the U.F. Church of Scotland.

<sup>2</sup> Of the U.F. Women's Hospital, Moukden.



## SO UNLIKE DEATH

have not been to one, and they are all doing well. Changed times! I tell Sally we shall soon be able to go home.

"I must put my things together now and go. Fancy a honeymoon in Japan!"

"FAKUMEN, *December, 1916.*

"I am back from my honeymoon to work again, and I am so glad the daily round and common task are what you like to hear about best. I am sometimes afraid my letters must be uninteresting from quiet Fakumen, but to me it is all far more interesting than even beautiful Japan."

"*January, 1917.*

"Hospital closes on Wednesday for a fortnight, and it's myself is glad. It is weary work these days with everything frozen hard and stiff. We have to melt out our trickles of medicines, and melt out our india-rubber tubings in hot water, and really melt out our own hands and our patients' too. We had two operations this morning under many difficulties, operating table in front of a blazing stove, and everybody stiff and cold. I don't think we have ever had such a cold winter, except the first one we spent in this house. We are all working hard for exams. I think



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it is more labour to me than to the nurses, for I forget the Chinese so easily. All this week we are having a special prayer meeting at five o'clock. We have it every New Year week, just a few of us in the dispensers' room and we all enjoy it. We are making a big forward push—'mobilising our forces,' as Mr. Macnaughtan calls it—for a good evangelistic effort at the Chinese New Year. We are to have special meetings then for a week, and every one is to bring a non-Christian neighbour. All the Christian women have promised to do something, signing their names to a promissory sheet, with a list of ways to help. They choose out what they can do, teach one person to read, bring one person to Church, pray every day for the meetings, etc. There seems to us to be a stirring among the dry bones, and we are so happy over it.

"Japan seems already like a dream, but what a beautiful dream! I wake up sometimes in the night and see those golden and purple sunsets, and the waterfalls with their crowns of scarlet maples. We are very quiet and happy together, my colleagues and I. We go for quick walks up the bare hills in biting north winds these evenings, trying to get up steam. Otherwise we grind away, School and Hospital,



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and wonder where the days fly to, and why the work is so happy.

“ I was visiting the Chinese Colonel’s baby yesterday, and talking to the Colonel who was an enquirer a year or so ago. He told me he couldn’t be a Christian now, as he is out after robbers this year, and a few weeks ago killed two of them with his own hand. ‘ I couldn’t be a Christian and do that, you see,’ he said to me. What would you have said to that ? ”

“ *January 30, 1917.*

“ These days are the full days of the Evangelistic Meetings. We began to-day, and had numbers far beyond our expectations, ninety-six women in one room, and over seventy children in the other. These women are almost all non-Christian, and have come to hear the Gospel for once. I am more glad than I can say. Rejoice with us.”

“ *February 15, 1917.*

“ There are crowds of out-patients, and I am asked to visit very often. Carts are at the door continually, at all sorts of inconvenient hours.

“ Oh dear, isn’t it sad about our brave



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bright Meta Fleming ? <sup>1</sup> She seemed so unlike death."

That was the last letter to her Mother.

The following is from her last Hospital Report <sup>2</sup> :—" Of the 214 visits paid to patients, a large proportion has been in the homes of the rich. The women in these homes are practically untouched by any other Christian influence. We have found them without exception quite willing to hear of Christ and His work. Even in the Yamen, where the Prefect's wife lost her young husband and two little sons, all within twelve days, we were allowed to go through the rows of chanting priests beside the coffins, and carry such consolation as we could to the poor young widow in the room beyond.

"They have come and gone, the hundreds of patients during the year, and looking back it seems but a blurred memory of faces, all showing signs of suffering. On some we watched the returning light of health brighten, and some grew sadder and more full of suffer-

<sup>1</sup> Of the Irish Mission to India. Died in Bombay on December 25, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> For the year 1916, the Fakumen Hospital statistics were :— In-patients, 156; Major operations, 111; Total number of treatments, 7,865.



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ing, and passed beyond our ken ; and to some came the great change which leaves even the saddest face full of a quiet peace. A few stand out with a special interest. Here is Mrs. Chen, whose bright face appears regularly now at Church, and at the enquirers' class, although she has to walk four miles to attend. It was in winter we saw her first in her own village, where she had fallen unconscious in the snow, and her face was so badly frost-bitten as to be unrecognisable. That was the beginning of things for her, for though her husband has been a Christian for years, his rather unenlightened method of beating her to force her to attend worship in the home, had never had the desired effect. A few visits to the Hospital and a little kindness have won her heart to enquire into the story of the Saviour."

It was a gracious providence from God that her friend from Scotland was with her so long during those last months. Coming from a skilled observer with a fresh mind from the West, Miss M'Kerrow's vivid pen-pictures which follow, are of peculiar interest and value :—

"I see her, day after day, in that little Hospital, for which she longed and planned



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and worked, when eleven and a half years ago she came as the first Medical Missionary to Fakumen. What tales it could tell of Chinese women coming to be healed in body, and learning there through her personality, as well as through her words and acts, something of the love of the Great Physician! As for the child patients, they were all sorry to leave, when the eye was better, or the little leg set and well. She had a passion for children, and well they knew it and responded in love to her. But perhaps what struck one most in the Hospital was the sight of the six Chinese dispensers, trained by her, and now skilfully assisting in all the work, and even able to relieve her to a great extent of night visits to outside patients.

“These young Chinese women were a constant testimony of the value of the missionary work in Fakumen. Day by day, she was unconsciously influencing them, as well as carefully training them. They learnt much by watching her with the crowd of out-patients, never too busy to have a smile for the children and a kindly word for all. They were trained through being given responsibility in Hospital, at the Dispensary, or in visiting patients outside.



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“At eight o'clock every morning the Doctor had prayers with them. This winter her talk was on the Book of Acts, and that they gained much was shown by their interest. Next followed her Chemistry class, in which her lesson for the day, with black-board illustration, was made clear with the gift of a true teacher. On Wednesday afternoons, a little group gathered on the kang, in the dispensers' room. It was a sight not to be forgotten. A lamp on the long, low table; a circle of eager faces; Bibles, note-books and pencils all in use. It was the dispensers' weekly Bible Study Class, which to the Doctor's delight the two day school teachers had also asked to be allowed to join. On Sunday afternoons, the patients in the Hospital looked forward to the Doctor's talk, and the dispensers learned how to make the message clear to these poor ignorant women. Then followed the Sunday evening prayer meeting with the dispensers—the secret of the influence of the work of the whole week. One of the girls had a note-book with suggested subjects for intercession, and their interests were kept world-wide. The little group in the lamp-light bringing their deepest longings for their work to Him Who was the inspiration of



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it all—not one who was there will ever forget it.

“A year ago a plan of which she had long dreamed was carried out: a little Branch Dispensary was opened at Kangping, twenty miles away, and put in charge of one of her dispensers, who had married the evangelist in that town. She paid a visit to this Dispensary every two months, to operate, take a fresh supply of medicines, and talk over the work with the dispenser. It was a long journey by cart, and, at this last visit, the Doctor's powers of walking, as usual, amazed the old carter. How could she keep up that swinging walk so long? Also, if she were paying for a cart, why walk so much of the way? What a welcome the little dispenser gave her and how glad she was to give her all the news of the last two months as they sat on the kang that evening!

“Next morning, patients flocked in even before breakfast was finished, but she had a welcoming smile for them all. Men, women and children were attended to, and it was late before she was ready for a meal. In the afternoon, more patients were seen. Then came visits to the Church members, some growing cold; but all ready to receive her.



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She came back in time to hold a little service on the kang with women and children packed closely together. She led the singing, with the help of a small boy, recently a patient in her Hospital and now following her every movement with eager eyes. A simple talk on the Hidden Treasure, full of illustrations from the Chinese life at their doors, held the attention of these simple folk. The evening was passing and she had had a long day, but the people were loth to leave. So she let them have more singing and taught the children—‘Two little eyes to look to God,’ in Chinese, with actions to suit. Women and children alike were pictures of happiness. At last all had to go, but it was not rest time for her yet. The year’s accounts had to be gone over with the dispenser, and much help and guidance given. What a joy when they found that, apart from the medicines supplied, the Dispensary had been self-supporting, and this its first year! Then, as friend to friend, they talked, until at last the day ended in sleep.

“On the way home, what plans she had for other Branch Dispensaries, where young women trained in her hospital could open up work. And then how she looked forward to a Chinese woman doctor! For she had sent a



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fine girl to Peking to train. What developments were possible in the future.

“Two days later came letters from Peking and a telegram : the medical student had taken typhoid and died. Her friends thought of all this meant to the lonely Doctor, but, with her it was the girl's family first, and at once she was away on another long cart journey to spend the week-end with them. What she was there in comfort and strength, all who knew her could imagine.

“Medicine was her work ; the Sunday School her recreation. She had read of modern Sunday School developments and was determined that the Fakumen boys and girls should have of the best. Graded lesson schemes and teachers' notes were obtained from the China Sunday School Union, also a book on the conduct of a training class. On Friday afternoons, after a busy day's work, the Doctor met with the Sunday School teachers. She told them that she knew nothing of this work, but that they would all learn together. Her great love for children and her high ideals for the Sunday School made her eager to follow suggestions based on the experience of others. The result was that in a short time the Fakumen Sunday School was a joy to



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teacher and scholar alike. Compared with home Sunday Schools, it could be ranked among the very best. Yet it was superintended by a busy Medical Missionary in China, and in one of the lonely stations in that far-off land !

“ With all this love of children, when Miss M’Williams was expecting to leave on furlough, she offered, if her new colleague preferred it, to give her the babies and take the old women herself !

“ The day before she took ill, she had a party for the Cradle Roll babies and their mothers. She arranged the presents for them in a red Chinese cradle and placed them in the centre of the room. Tea and sweets were passed round and she went about, the life of the party, always with one of the babies in her arms.

“ Her love for children was deep-seated. Her nieces and nephews had a special place in her heart. She used to say that she felt that they ‘ belonged ’ to her. The little boys of her colleagues were an untold joy and her biggest sorrows in these eleven years were the times when two of these little ones left their earthly home at Fakumen. Her love went out also to the Chinese children, even to the



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dirtiest ! It took a year or two, she said, before she really loved them enough to *enjoy* taking them in her arms. One has to visit in humble Chinese homes to know what it meant. Certainly if one forgot the unwashed exterior, the boys and girls were full of attraction, but most people loved them at arms' length. She loved them with a love that wanted them in her arms, and they knew it and were devoted to her. Many a mother, too, she won by this loving touch with the boys and girls.

“ A long, hot summer and much sickness, serious illness also amongst the dispensers, meant that, when it came to November, the Doctor was indeed ready for a holiday. It was a joy to her to be able to fulfil a long-cherished dream and visit Japan. Always a lover of nature, it needed the true poet's power to make a ‘House Beautiful’ in Manchuria in winter. When the millet was cut and the last flower had died in the autumn frost, she would read her favourite R.L.S., and she did indeed let

Autumnal frosts enchant the pool,  
And make the cart-ruts beautiful.

But picture her in Japan, with the maples at their best, scarlet amongst the golden



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autumn-tinted trees, and with a dark background of giant cryptomeria. How she revelled in Nikko, where she had her desire of living in a Japanese inn, and where scenery, and ancient tomb and temple alike attracted her ; Miyanoshita, where from Lake Hakone she saw the wonder of the snow-clad Fuji ; Shioya by the Inland Sea, where on a perfect autumn afternoon, she feasted on the marvellous colours of a sunset, watching the scores of boats with sails now golden, now dark, as they glided away into the gates of the West.

“ In Korea, she was the missionary eager to learn what might help her in her work. Now it was a Mission Hospital, and she was noting everything, down to the nurses’ dress. She took home the pattern of the cap, for she had long been wanting to have her dispensers in uniform. Again, it was the self-support of the Churches in Korea that struck her, and she was full of plans for developing this more fully in her own sphere. Everywhere she went, she won friends. Her sense of humour made her an ideal traveller, and her stories enlivened many a walk. She was so unconscious and self-effacing that she would have been amazed had she known what the people she met thought of her.



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“ Then she came home to Fakumen, gladly, for it was ‘ Home ’ to her, that little house, which she christened ‘ *Who’d ha’ thought it ?* ’ when after much longing and planning, it came into being. She had passed through the hard, lonely stage of the first years of missionary service : she had come to her own. The Chinese language had cost long steady struggles ; but she was now at home in it. Her Hospital work she had built up from the very beginning, and now her head dispenser could even keep it open during her month’s holiday. Her Sunday School was organised and a constant joy to her. To one of her temperament, medical work cost a great deal. In fact, if it had not been for her keen desire to serve in one of the most needy parts of the world, she would not have been a Doctor. But having decided to be a missionary, she chose medicine as her sphere. And she was eager to be at her best. She had begun to study a large medical tome just at the New Year time of her last year, with a fresh determination to keep up-to-date in her practice.

“ Fortunately she knew how to play. On Friday afternoons especially, when the Training Class was over, how she revelled in a game of tennis ! The hills around Fakumen were



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all known and named by her. Many a tramp she enjoyed over those brown fields. On her return from one of these walks, she would write a little sketch with the pen of a true word-painter. In the evenings she would read aloud 'Moirá O'Neill,' when her study was done, and we sat round the stove fire, before going to bed. Then she would let us see how she longed that some one would make Manchuria live, for those who did not see beyond the bare brown exterior—live with a thrill as the Glens of Antrim did. She would not believe that she had the gift, though we pressed her to continue writing. Manchuria had gripped her heart, and her life was given willingly, whole-heartedly to the people of that land.

"Her place amongst the missionaries in Manchuria, Irish and Scottish alike, was such as she never guessed. As missionary, she was placed on the Irish Executive; as doctor, she was asked to lecture at the Medical College in Moukden when the War left the staff short-handed; as colleague, she was the beloved of all. It was the reality of her daily fellowship with her Master that told in her life. Her personality, in consequence, exercised an influence all unconscious to herself, and it was



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felt wherever she went. And that influence will live—live in China, and live in many parts of the world, in those who will always be thankful for having known her as friend ; to whom she was and always will be a constant inspiration ; and who rejoice, in the midst of all their sorrow, that she is now in the fulness of joy in the presence of her Lord.”



## CHAPTER IX

### IRELAND'S NOBLEST GIFT

“It is good to give Love’s best to Him who loves us best and for ever.”

“Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.”

HYMN OF ST. PATRICK.

“And He stretched forth His hand and touched the leper.” He was not afraid of the infection or of the Church’s law against such a daring act. The medical missionary, following in the Master’s footsteps, must come into close contact with the virulent diseases of the insanitary East.

On Friday, the 16th March, the Doctor saw her patients as usual, and conducted her Teachers’ Training Class. In the afternoon she went with her two colleagues for a short walk, but complained of feeling tired. Next morning her throat gave her trouble. She



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treated herself. But on Sunday there was no improvement, and her Chinese friend, Dr. Hsu, the only other qualified Doctor in the town, was sent for. His diagnosis showed that the case was serious. Dr. Russell Young, of the Scottish Mission, Tieling, the nearest Mission Doctor, was wired for. When he came, two injections of anti-diphtheritic serum were given, which brought relief to the sufferer. Dr. Young had good hopes of her recovery, and though there was some difficulty in speaking, no one imagined that the end was near. The illness seemed to be taking a normal course, when, in the midst of the careful treatment and constant nursing, suddenly without warning of any kind, the heart ceased to beat. "What is it, Ida?" asked Miss M'Williams. "Her lovely eyes wide open," but with no look of recognition in them, her spirit had passed beyond recall. It was three o'clock in the morning of Friday, 23rd March.

The Chinese simply could not believe it. "On Monday the 26th," says her sister, Mrs. McWhirter, "the Church members came for Ida and took her to Church for the last time. I think the whole little city of Fakumen was out to see her pass. First came a large cross covered with flowers and the Chinese inscrip-



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tion, 'Chi Tai Fu (Dr. Mitchell) walks with God,' then ten white banners telling of her love and devotion for their people, for whom she had laid down her life. Then the white bier carried by eight men. The missionaries followed, then came her six Hospital dispensers and about one hundred of her little Sabbath School scholars. Next, the Elders and Chinese Pastor, then the school girls and boys, followed by the long procession of Church members and old patients—five hundred in all, I am sure. As we passed through crowded streets, we caught the words, 'Good Doctor,' so often. Every one who knew her loved her.

"The service in the Church was very touching. Elder Shang spoke with tears in his eyes:—'Our Doctor has given her life for us. For twelve years she has been at the call of any one who suffered. She was like a man in her strength, and rose at any hour of night or day to help us. Her name is known and revered through all this country. Her skill was most wonderful to us. Her life was like sweet perfume. In all our Church work she had a share, and in losing her, we have lost what no words can express, and our sorrows cannot be counted. But her work was done,



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and as a grain of wheat must fall into the ground and die, so she who did so much by her life, will do even more by her death, and we must bow to God's will.' The Pastor asked for prayer for her Father and Mother. 'If our grief is such,' he said, 'what must theirs be!' We sang 'Around the throne of God in Heaven thousands of children stand.' This hymn she had taught her little folk, and you should have heard the wee voices coming out strong in—'Glory, glory, glory.' Every seat in Church was full of weeping sorrowful people—even the tinies had solemn faces. Dr. Margaret McNeill was in Ida's place at the little organ. As the service closed, the first ray of sunshine out that bleak day came through the western window and shone on the gilt carving of the text over the pulpit—'The glory of the Lord shall fill the whole earth,' and fell with a little ray of crimson on the corner of the coffin as it rested on the Communion Table."

A great company of her fellow missionaries from all parts of Manchuria met at Kirin, the home of her sister, to see her laid to rest on the 28th March on the sunny hillside of the little Russian Cemetery, not far from the



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grave of another devoted young doctor, also called away in life's prime, Dr. Arthur Peill, the "Beloved Physician of Tsangchow."

Perhaps the most wonderful thing about Dr. Mitchell's passing is told in what follows:—"When I went through her papers," says Mrs. McWhirter, "I found everything in perfect order. If you could see the Hospital! You would think it had been prepared for inspection, everything in immaculate order, just as she left it after her last busy day. The names and diseases of the twenty-eight patients she saw that Friday morning, the last day she was out, all written in her books in her beautifully neat writing. A full description of her last operation on the 15th, a little girl's hand, entered in the Operation Book, with treatment to be followed. In her Operating Room, her white canvas shoes at the end of the row of special ones the dispensers wore in that room. In the waiting-room, the blackboard all written in Chinese, with the heads of her last lesson to her Training Class in preparation for Sunday, the first half on methods of teaching, the second on the lesson, with the text 'He will go before you.' And the chalk just where she laid it down, two hours before she went to bed feeling ill.



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“ In the very middle of her busy life, full of new plans for further service, she laid it all quietly down and passed on, but she left everything in such perfect order that surely never did the King find any of his servants more ready to enter the Higher Service.”

“ Sunday, 25th March,” says Miss M’Williams, “ was Children’s Service Day. *Ida had the work so well organized that things went on exactly the same as when she was there.* It can go on, if the children are kept supplied with the various little things that are needed. I was greatly struck by the text on the leaflet for that Sunday: ‘ Rejoice with me.’ It seemed a direct message from herself.”

*Their works do follow them.*

“ The women along the streets,” wrote Mrs. McWhirter, when on a visit to Fakumen five months afterwards, “ would stop me to speak of her. ‘ Yes, you’re like the Doctor—a little! And your voices are the same,’ and then from behind they would drag a shy wee lassie or a nice fat wee boy. ‘ This was the Doctor’s good friend, she never passed without a word for her.’ ‘ This one we thought would never walk, but you see for yourself how strong his legs have grown.’ ‘ This one was



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dead, but the Doctor brought back her breath and she has passed her fourth birthday. There was never any one like the Doctor.' It was the same everywhere. Her memory is very fragrant with them, and their grief is very genuine.

"I went to the morning Sunday School in the big upper room with the sunshine streaming in. I was simply amazed at the way the girls conducted it. A young dispenser opened, another played the organ, a third beat time, and a fourth pointed to each character in the hymn, which was written out large and pinned on the board. A little prayer was said in unison, then the teacher for the day read over the lesson in child's language. Then a tiny stood at the desk with a silver bowl, and the others marched to singing and dropped in their cash. Then while the tiny held the bowl high above his little bowed head, there was a short prayer of dedication of the money. Then the classes formed, three or at most four to each young teacher. I sat in several classes and was delighted at the freshness and simpleness of the teaching—just a quarter of an hour, I think. A stave was played on the organ as a signal for change, and the kiddies all commenced to colour with crayons the



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big outline characters on the leaflets. Another bar of music, and the senior girl who was leading went up to the desk, and question and answer in quick succession went on for five minutes—and didn't those wee ones answer ! Then the leader produced a big sand-tray with a nice hill on which were growing tall grasses and cornflowers ; a river, and a smaller hill, were all arranged. Then came David tall and stately in white paper clothes, with a red string round his waist, and an extra fine shepherd's crook. After him came the sheep, about a dozen, awfully neat, two pieces of millet and four legs. Out came another tray, a forest ! And in the middle of it a white fringed lion, the typical kind the Chinese draw. This fearsome beast bounded over to the peaceful valley, and made off with a sheep. David gave chase, rescued the lamb, and then had an encounter with the lion in which his clothes were all torn, but the lion's head came off at last, and all was well. I shall have a try at reproducing the figures for my children in Kirin, but I shall never be able to touch at that dramatic showing of them. Another little hymn and the Lord's Prayer, and we all trooped out. Talk of memorials, Mother ! There is one of the finest in that Infant



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Sunday School that mortal heart could crave."

What is the message to us in the sudden Home-call of one so gifted, so dearly loved by all? "This spake He, signifying by what death he should glorify God." "God seems to require of some of His servants," says Mrs. Inglis,<sup>1</sup> "that they should glorify Him and do Him special service, just by the striking manner of their death." So it was in the Plague year with Dr. Arthur Jackson. But after all, the death, no matter how striking, can only speak to us by drawing our attention to the life that went before. Dr. Mitchell's letters and verses have introduced us to her inmost thoughts. They reveal two marked characteristics of her nature. She was *Irish*, and she was *Christian*.

She was Irish—that was the key to her mystic, imaginative, melancholy, quiet, passionate, joyous and rollicking temperament. A chapter in Campbell Moody's "The Heathen Heart" is headed with the alluring title, "Why Missionaries are Uninteresting." Good reasons are suggested, but there are exceptions to every rule. Uninteresting? One

<sup>1</sup> Wife of the Rev. J. W. Inglis, M.A. (U.F. Mission), Theological College, Moukden.



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day during her furlough a generous lady presented her with a gold sovereign for the support of Mission work. "Thank you so much," said Dr. Ida. "It will do to buy some Teddy Bears with." The lady was horrified. Once at Hallowe'en time, the Padre was away on a journey. His sorrowful family was invited over to the Ladies' House for supper. It was growing dark, when a great hubbub arose, the servants shouting—"The Padre has arrived." Hearing a bass voice, the children rushed in great excitement down the hall to see a familiar overcoat and hat, but the person inside was not the Padre! When the noise had subsided, a loud rapping began at the hall door—an old woman with a lantern begging for pity. She entered the house, and behold! it was "Auntie Mac," with a big cardboard box full of chocolates, cakes, crackers and salted peanuts, for the children. Uninteresting? In the bare and bitter winter, she could produce flowers by tying artificial pansies or marguerites along with a few *real* pansies in such a way that one could not discover which were real. Ah, those table decorations in the little Grey House! The comical men made with carrots, and rows of black currants for buttons, and



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potato-heads with currant-eyes, or the red and white pop-corn devices on the tablecloth, or the birthday presents tied with coloured ribbons, in that lonely outpost of Asia where no birthday was every forgotten ! Perhaps in having a distaste for argument, she was not altogether Irish. But no one had a keener relish for a joke. One can picture her delight at the remark made to her by a pious old evangelist Boanerges, who brought his wife to the Hospital very ill. " If she recovers," he said, " we will thank the Lord, and if she dies, we will thank the Lord *still more!*"

She was Christian. That greatest of all titles of distinction covers many types. Let us see, if we can, something of what in her case the title " Christian " meant. Religion is the eternal quest, instinctive in every human soul, of Truth, Goodness and Beauty. These three are One. But most of us imperfect mortals miss either the beauty of holiness, or the holiness of beauty. Dr. Mitchell was not an angel. She was an Irish girl. But because of her, some of us, both from the East and from the West, believe more surely in the Lord who was made flesh. We beheld in her His Glory—the fascination of a life filled with both grace and truth. Her head dispenser, a



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young woman with a touch of spiritual genius, watched her at close quarters for years. And at the end, her testimony was :—" I felt she was inspired. The Doctor is so good and holy, what must Jesus be like ? Whatever she did, she inspired us all and made us love to be more like her."

The hidden spring of such a character necessarily eludes us. In part, no doubt, the secret of her charm lay in a gentleness, a sincere humility, that was never aggressive. Especially during her early years in China, she did not seem made to stand alone. She *needed* others. Once she confessed to Pat's Mother that she could not have borne the strain and isolation of her first year in the country, had it not been for little Pat. The child helped her over those trying months. It is one of the rewards of the missionary's high calling that, in a strange and difficult environment, with few human resources to rely upon, personality develops more fully and quickly than in the homeland. We all become more independent when we go abroad. So it was with Dr. Ida. Sensitive, poetic, clinging and wistful, when she came amongst us in the East, her rare gifts rapidly blossomed in the fertile soil of loneliness and pain. As



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the years sped on, she grew to be more human, joyous and strong, a more exquisitely fashioned instrument of service in the cause of God and man. "Never," said her colleague<sup>1</sup> of the last year in Fakumen, "had I seen her more fit and eager for her work, with larger plans for its development, than during the last few months." And yet, the more her powers ripened, the deeper her humility became. "No good in the world" at administration—such is her opinion of her own capacity. On the other hand, Dr. Greig, the senior doctor of the Irish Mission, considered her Hospital to be "the finest managed in Manchuria."

The real source of her winsomeness, however, remained what it had always been. One of her fellow students at Glasgow, says:—"To me, her inner mind, her deepest self, was a sanctuary, a place not lightly entered. To those who knew and were allowed to enter, she was a true healer of heart wounds—wounds that would bleed under another's touch, and which therefore others never knew. She had a balsam of her own, distilled during silent hours of prayer, from Him who is our true Heart-healer." She was a healer because she took the sufferings of others upon herself.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. Stevenson, M.A.



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An old woman was brought into the Dispensary on a plank. The day was hot, and the flies swarmed in after her. When the sores with which she was covered were opened up, the stench was unbearable. One dispenser took ill. It was the Doctor herself who wrapped up the poor creature in newspapers and ointment, and had then to hurry away to change all her clothes. In a week a marvellous cure was seen.

The Women's Association for Foreign Missions of the Irish Church has recorded what is simple fact :—"No one can hope to be to the Chinese people a more faithful picture than she was of the Master, in whose footsteps she so closely followed." Striving to save others, she could not save herself. It was thus she gave up her life. For shortly before her last illness, while she was narrowly examining a Chinese woman's throat, *the patient coughed in her face.*

The "Præparatio Evangelica," with which her life began, continued to the end—the new beginning. "Perhaps," says Mr. Hunter, "had not our eyes been holden, we should have seen in that wondrous power of work, of sympathy, of insight, of lovableness, of all the graces that we now see illumined the life



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of our dear friend—a preparation for the great glory. But we expected all this loveliness of personal character, these surpassing graces, to be with us always. A mind and body, which we now see were working far beyond mortal power, were unfitted to bear the strain and shock of disease ever around.”

“She was always so near,” writes another of her colleagues, “that the little way further into His presence, with only a day or two of illness at the last, is like a translation, not death.” God had given her the victory over all that was of earth.

Have we then discovered Doctor Ida's secret, or heard the message of her life? With all her intense feeling for perfection in great things and in small, she was—at least her Mother says so, and no one on earth knew her better—an ordinary girl. What she did, any other girl in Ireland can do. So her Mother says. I wish it were true. What an untold blessing to China if it were!

She was Christian, and she was Irish—a combination that produced St. Brigid, St. Columba, and the long line of Missionary Saints, who sailed the narrow seas to Scotland and the continent of Europe. They died, but the spirit of Christ and the sacrificial passion



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of Ireland are immortal. Still as in the days of old, by giving of its highest life does Ireland live. To enrich the world, her treasures are poured forth. Among the glorious company of her apostles stands "an ordinary girl." Could the Isle of Saints have bestowed upon the ancient East a nobler gift than Isabel Deane Mitchell?



## CHAPTER X

### THROUGH WESTERN EYES <sup>1</sup>

“God must be glad, one loves His world so much.”

ROBERT BROWNING.

“For there is another, a dearer land,  
A land that is misty and grey,  
And your heart must leap at the name of Home,  
Though it's thousands of miles away.

“For heart's-ease lies on its soft green slopes,  
And peace on its misty shore,  
And Erin must reign in your heart alone  
For ever and evermore.”

From “The Far East,” by I. D. M.

### A MORNING HOLIDAY

THE Eighth Moon Feast has come. For days before, greasy apprentices had been seen in the streets, their blue aprons tucked up into their belts, carrying on their shoulders wide

<sup>1</sup> This chapter consists of examples of Dr. Mitchell's occasional work in prose and verse. Where possible, the pieces are dated.



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square trays piled high with moon-cakes, large and round and flat, filled with black sticky sweetstuffs, and arranged in great pyramids, beginning with the largest round, and tapering off at the top of the pole with a gaudy sugar peach, which was to bring the "thousand thousand years" of happy life to the fortunate recipient. Beside the cakes were piles of golden pears, or rosy apples, or bunches of the first luscious purple grapes of the autumn. But now the present-giving was over, and the feast day had come. A pleasing odour of garlic and fat pork dumplings pervaded the streets, and through the open windows the worthy sons of the Celestial Empire might be seen cross-legged at their little tables, vigorously plying their chopsticks, while the Celestial daughters waited upon them in the good time-honoured fashion. And we had a morning's holiday. We were up and away before the sun was high, leaving the odours of the streets behind us, and climbing up and into the clean sweet air of the hills. A certain grassy knoll was our objective, where the breeze swept purely over, and the tall millet shaded us from the advancing sun. We had books, of course, a long quiet morning in the grass, with a favourite



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book, and the illimitable sky overhead—could one ask for anything better? And yet there was something even better in store for us. We lay luxuriously against Mother Earth with our cheek to the grass. But away to the West lay a long line of blue hills—and who could read even the most dearly loved friend of a book when God had painted those deep red-brown heads of millet against that background of misty blue? The eye was caught and held in perfect satisfaction and perfect rest. Beside us the millet rose high too, and here we could see every stalk, tall and straight and golden, with its wealth of red grain atop, and the long leaves like pennons in a breeze, now golden, where the sun fell level on them, and now scarlet, like a flame, when the wind lifted them, and the light shone through. And all the time such a murmuring of delight, as they swayed and nodded and tossed their heads: an army—yes, an army—gay and debonair, with songs on their lips and gorgeous pennons flying. Little they reckoned that the sickle was not far away. They were happy and full of life and the time was autumn, and the day newborn. And we, we too, “could not but be gay in such a jocund company.”

The sun rose hotter and stronger, and soon



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we were fain to leave our knoll, and seek more shelter in the valley. We came down through the levels, where the wide vegetable gardens cover the plain. What is this blue smoke at the corner of the melon patch? Oh, a coffin has been placed there, waiting its appointed number of days for its burial. To-day is the "third seventh day," and the entire family of the dead man is out to burn paper and incense for him. The smoke rises and curls in the still hot noonday air, and as we approach nearer, the sound of wailing reaches us. There they all are, the widow in white sackcloth, with her white cap and long streamers flying, weeping bitterly; the daughter-in-law, the little sons, who hardly know what they are doing, and are not too much engrossed to turn on their knees and gaze at us as we pass. The paper is not burning well. Poke it up again with the long stick. That is better. Now to your wailing again. And as we pass on, the mournful sound breaks out afresh.

How is it that the sky seems darkened, even at this hour of glorious noon, and the air of the plain is all at once hot and stifling?

Strange land, so full of charm and of contradictions and of brilliant elusive beauty! What is it in you that stirs our hearts, so that



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sometimes the very sight of the old square mosque standing up against the crimson western sky leaves us shaken in a tremulous gladness? Only one far far other land can move our hearts like this, a little land far away in the Western Sea, where the eternal ocean laps against its shores, the shores of home. But you—you are so beautiful, so old, and so very very needy—China. We give you our hearts.

*February, 1917.*

### WAY-SONG

Rise and go the rock-path grey  
In the dusk before the day.  
On, on, through the treeless brown,  
While the sun swings up and down,  
On his own blue open way.

Crackling branches parched and dry,  
Pile them for your night-fire high.  
Rest, your pilgrim feet unshod,  
Smoke and dream and own your God  
In the bright stare of His Sky.

### THE OPEN ROAD

From the hood of the covered cart it stretches before us, level and white and straight. Behind lies the busy town, buried



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deeply in snow, an unwonted quiet resting on its crooked streets. The great trees by the frozen lake whisper to each other cautiously, and send down a white shower of snow-blossoms with every movement of their frozen branches, but the sedges at the shallow lake-side stand stiff and unbending, and never a murmur of their summer talk sounds among them.

And before us lies the open road. No quiet decorous road this, making its way softly between well-kept hedgerows, but a rude bare cart-track, leading without any pretence at comfort straight into the great white unknown. On either hand the low rolling hills stretch gently up to meet the sky-line. The sky itself in the winter mid-day is almost as white as the snow around, horizon meeting hill-crest. One upward look to the zenith with its deep satisfying blue reassures us, and we turn our attention again to the open road.

A magpie skims low across our path in black-and-white grace. "One for sorrow"—and born of the land of our childhood, the faintest cloud of apprehension floats across our spirit. In a moment, however, we are counting—"Two for joy"—and the



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shadow has vanished. But these first visitors are only the precursors of many, and soon we know that the joy and sorrow of the open road are much interrupted, even as in our daily life.

We are not alone on the road. As our little cart rumbles southward we meet a stream of great lumbering carts going steadily north. Emigrants these, poor birds of passage, coming from their home in the south, where last year's floods have left no least hope of a harvest for the coming year, and trekking north, ever north, in search of fresh fields and pastures new, which lie green and fair in their imagination. The carts are covered for the most part with matting, closed against the north wind, with only a niche left for the driver, who with a blue cloth tied over his face, leaving only the eyes visible under the old fur cap, urges his mules on with frozen fingers on the whip. Looking into the open back of the cart, we catch a glimpse of women and children wrapped in many tattered wadded garments, huddled together on bundles of bedding, while behind walk the men of the company, sometimes six or seven strong, who go together dully with down-bent heads, reminding one grotesquely of the slow



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mourners at a funeral. No word is spoken, only a grim plodding on, with weather-worn faces the colour of the deep-brown earth, where it shows on the melted patches on the grave mounds. Each lustreless face is ringed with a halo of glistening frost, where the frozen breath clings to the rough flaps of their worn caps.

We count them carelessly as they pass, but the constant iteration of the picture on the brain rouses us to look more closely. What a sameness, and yet infinite variety, in the poor household chattels they carry ! Here comes the twenty-seventh cart, with its old worn brass-hinged presses, roped closely to the sides. Twenty-eight has two tables in addition, and a baby's cradle on top of all. Twenty-nine has even a great grindstone in the centre of the cart, and an empty bird-cage rattles lightly behind. One little boy is carrying a kitten, which mews pitifully in the cold, as the cart stands still while the driver readjusts a knot in the worn harness. On and on they come until we have passed thirty-four in a short ten miles of road. One man, lagging further behind than the others, stumbles right against our first slow-going mule. The driver pulls up sharply with a shout, and the



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man steps aside with a slow smile. "He was asleep," some one remarks, "they walk day and night, these men, and sleep on their feet."

And this is the song of the open road—"On and ever on, to where the fruitful pastures are, and we shall rest and be satisfied." Strange hope of the migratory peoples, based on so little of certainty! But which of us could ever trudge the weary stretches of our open road without the alluring glimpse of Hope's wings as she ever speeds before us?

*March, 1916.*

## THE HOSPITAL STAIR

The fading light of the Hospital stair,  
Where the footsteps come and go,  
And a boyish face uplifted there  
Caught the last flickering glow.

We passed with only a look, a word,  
And the darkness has round me grown,  
But I know there is light on the Hospital stair,  
And a glow on the steps of stone.

And I pray that his path may be always bright,  
Though the world around grows old,  
Till Heaven's light falls on the upturned face  
As he mounts the steps of gold.

GLASGOW, 1902.



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### WHERE IS SHE TO-DAY ?

Gone into the shadowy land,  
Beyond the touch of my human hand,  
Beyond the hopes that my heart had planned—  
Where is she to-day ?

Gone without word or sign,  
She whose spirit had but touched mine,  
Whom I fain would have led to the corn and wine—  
Where is she to-day ?

She had learned the name of her Saviour Lord,  
She had read a page of His Holy Word,  
But the heart of her—was it deeply stirred ?  
Where is she to-day ?

Oh ! faithless heart, you need not fear.  
To the heart of the Saviour she too was dear,  
And rest assured that He is near  
Where she is to-day.

Perchance she has seen Him face to face,  
And the glorious beauty of His grace  
Has led her safe to her resting-place,  
Where she is to-day.

One thing I know, as here I stand,  
She is safe in the clasp of a Father's hand,  
And far beyond all my heart had planned  
She has gained to-day.



## THROUGH WESTERN EYES

### BLUE LARKSPUR <sup>1</sup>

She lived in a little clustered village, where the flat-roofed, brown mud houses sheltered together amid the wide stretches of the millet-fields. She and her sister kept house turn about on the quiet Sabbath days, and little Larkspur was learning to read her New Testament, and to say a few of the easy hymns they sang in the village Chapel.

It was in the sweet summer time that trouble came to the little mud house. The green millet had grown very high, far away above Blue Larkspur's head, as she danced down the narrow paths with their walls of green, far even above her father's head; for the grain grew high there, and the heavy green heads nodded in the breeze, and the long shiny green leaves rustled in the soft night air and sang little Larkspur to sleep, many a time. The family all slept in the one small room, on the wide brick kang, which was the family sitting-place in the daytime, and on which they spread their mattresses at night. One night, when midnight was at its deepest and stillest over all the land, a shot rang

<sup>1</sup> From *Daybreak*.



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sharply in the little room, and a sudden bullet was lodged in the rafter. Blue Larkspur's father sprang to his feet, and in her terror Larkspur threw her arms around his knees and clung to him. Without a moment's interval another bullet whizzed through the window, open wide to the cool summer night. Then came a stunning agony as it passed right through the little clinging body and into her father's leg. Father and child fell in a heap on the kang. What happened after that, Little Larkspur never knew.

The robbers followed quickly on their dastardly shots, great rough men with fierce faces and cruel hands. Paying no attention to the groaning man and the unconscious child, they demanded from the eldest brother all the money he had in the house. He protested his utter ignorance of any money, of any hiding-place whatsoever. But the robbers could not wait. The villagers might come at any moment ; their spoil must be secured at once. Quick as lightning the great black food-pot was smashed and wrenched from its place in the brick stove, and while cruel hands bound the strong brother, other cruel hands kindled a fire of the dried millet stalk piled in the kitchen. Then they held him over



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the flames until all his flesh was scorched and burned, shouting all the time, "Tell us quickly where the money is."

The brave young wife had fled to raise the neighbours from the little village street, and soon they came thirty or forty strong, pulling on their coats as they ran, and catching up whatever weapons they had. But the robbers were gone. The young man was lying bound, and crying out in his pain, and the tiny hoard of a poor man's savings was gone too, into the green recesses of the miles of millet.

But the human wreckage left behind! What was to be done? Away ten miles over the hills was the nearest Hospital, and the nearest chance of help. So willing hands went to work. Rough stretchers were made, bearers were soon ready, the sufferers were gently lifted, and the procession started. That was how little Larkspur came to us, carried by eight strong men, with her little face drawn with suffering, and the frightened eyes, to which consciousness had returned, looking out upon us with a confused dread. From the first we had very little hope of the little girl's life. But she came through her operation bravely, with the kind help of the "dream-medicine," and wakened again in a



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cool quiet room in a little white bed. Then followed a weary week of lying still, with restlessness stirring every nerve, and the burning heat of the summer days adding to the fever of the parched lips. The nights were the worst, those long, breathless nights, when all the other patients lay in refreshing sleep, and only the one little sufferer tossed wearily on her pillow. We never left her day or night, and often through the long hours before the dawn she would ask us to sing to her, sometimes joining with her little weak voice in "Jesus loves me," or "Christ receiveth sinful men." And once, thinking herself alone and quiet, we found her praying softly to the loving Heavenly Father that he would carry his little lamb safely through the Valley of the Shadow. She made a brave fight for life, which had been sweet and bright to her. But after a week's vain struggling, the gentle angel, who comes with noiseless step and veiled face, at last brought to little suffering Larkspur peace and rest.

*August, 1910.*



# THROUGH WESTERN EYES

TO MR. GOA <sup>1</sup>

O Man of the East, you have come,  
With your brown eyes, and pigtail so neat ;  
With your queer little walk, and your great flow of  
    talk,  
You are East from your head to your feet.

O Man of the East, you have gone,  
The pain in your inside to cure ;  
For your tongue went so fast, it never could last,  
And so you took ill, to be sure.

O Man of the East, I am sad,  
You have suffered all this at my hand ;  
But your words, they were many, and I had not any,  
So how could I understand ?

Perhaps, O Man of the East,  
Some day we shall better know,  
And the East and the West will both do their best,  
And in full understanding at last shall be blest,  
But we've got a long way to go !

1906.

## THE SABBATH SEA

Blue and green, blue and green,  
With a sparkling network of silver sheen,  
It is singing on for evermore  
Its hymn of praise upon the shore.

<sup>1</sup> Her Chinese teacher.



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Laughing light, laughing light,  
Tossed in a shower from the foam crests white,  
The darkness has fled from the heart of the sea,  
And the waves are shouting in victory.

Light and life, light and life,  
Flung in glad music from the strife,  
And the soft wind answers with every breath,  
“Our Lord is Conqueror over death.”

It is the Resurrection Day,  
Darkness and death have fled away :  
For the heart that will listen to the sea  
There is no more despondency.

O Lord of the sparkling sunlit sea,  
O Lord of eternal victory,  
Lay Thy conquering hand on the world's despair,  
And let there be gladness everywhere.

Thou hast bidden Thy glorious sea rejoice,  
Thy gladness is ringing in its voice :  
Tune our hearts to the joy and light and life,  
Wake the soul-music from the soul-strife.

Blue and green and silver sheen,  
And all that the sea and sun may mean,  
God has sent you to drive the shadows away,  
And fill the earth with the joy of His Day.

PEITAIHO, *August*, 1907.



# THROUGH WESTERN EYES

## THE BOY AND THE RAINBOW

He started bravely from his father's door,  
This little lad of ancient fable's fame—  
The rainbow's edge his wished-for starting-place,  
The rainbow's topmost arch his final aim.

And up the arch he climbed with eager feet :  
Below him far the purple mists lay spread,  
While fiery red and crimson glowed the clouds,  
Brightening to amber round his childish head.

And as the topmost step was reached at last,  
A glorious city fair before him lay,  
And happy people thronged the shining street,  
And laughing children passed him on his way.

Great temples stood within the city fair,  
And cloisters bright and full of holy calm,  
And all the souls who knelt therein to pray  
Were cleansed from sin and kept from every harm.

And all the men were great and true and good,  
And each held each in honour and esteem,  
And all the women pure and sweet were found,  
And fairer far than youth's forgotten dream.

The child gazed long, with eager eyes intent,  
Upon the city stretched beneath the blue,  
Then turned to read the name above the gate—  
“The city of the things men meant to do.”



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### WHERE DOES IT GO ?

Where does it go, the bonnie, bonnie day ?  
Where does it speed on swift feet away,  
The crimson glory of the dawn,  
The glowing of the noon,  
The tender light of sunset skies  
That always come too soon ?

Oh ! not in vain the radiance  
Across the morning skies,  
Oh ! not in vain the eve that brings  
Rest to the weary eyes.

A world of beauty and of work,  
Of happiness and ills,  
Lies spread beneath a Father's eye  
Among Manchurian hills.

Look up and let thy soul be healed  
Of all its weary smart ;  
There's a wealth of God's own beauty  
In old China's hidden heart.

1915.





IF IT DIE, IT BEARETH MUCH FRUIT



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



