

SOWING
AND
REAPING

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LETTERS

from the

REV. GRIFFITH JOHN.D.D.

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Sowing and Reaping



Letters from the
Rev. Griffith John DD

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LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY

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1897



Sowing and Reaping

LETTER I

November 12th, 1895

DEAR MR. COUSINS,—



Here we are weather-bound, and likely to be so for the next twenty-four hours at least. I feel I can do nothing better than spend a

part of the time in trying to give you some account of our visit to the districts of Tien-Men and King-Shan. Last year's visit was full of interest, and the visit of this year has not been less so.

Mr. Bonsey and myself left Hankow on the 29th ult., and reached Pah-tsze-nau, in Tien-Men, on the 2nd inst. Thus it took us more

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than four days to make a journey of about 120 miles. On the third day we reached the lake country, and found that the great floods of the year, concerning which we had heard so much at Hankow, had caused the water to rise to an unusual height. The several lakes were lost in one vast expanse of water, and we seemed to be crossing an immense inland sea. The boatmen were naturally anxious lest the wind should fail us. Fortunately, a brisk breeze sprang up just as we entered the mouth of the lake, which carried us right across, and soon after the sun had set we found ourselves safely anchored on the other side. I asked the boatmen how wide the lake was, and was not surprised to learn that it was more than thirty miles.

We anchored at a small place called Yü-kia-hang. No sooner did we anchor than the wind changed, and began to blow from the north. Before midnight it had risen to a hurricane, and the cold had become very intense. Early next morning I ventured outside. Whilst standing

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on the fore part of the boat, a rickety old house just in front of me began to swing to and fro, and before I had time to give it a second thought the whole concern was down about my ears. Fortunately, the structure consisted of timber and thatch, and so fell against the boat as to form a perfect pen, in which I found myself most snugly ensconced. Not a post nor a beam touched. When I realized the situation, it appeared to me so ridiculous that I found it impossible not to indulge in a loud laugh, which, as I learnt afterwards, brought much relief to the folk inside the boat, who had heard the crash, but did not know what had become of me. No sooner, however, did I emerge out of the *débris* than I saw that the event might have had a different ending, and my heart went out in gratitude to God for the deliverance. As the day went on the wind became more and more keen and cutting, and by bedtime it was so cold in our chinky boat that I felt there was nothing for it but to rush into my Chinese

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sack just as I was—clothes, boots, and all. In this way I managed to keep warm, but barely warm enough.

By the morning the wind had abated considerably, and we started for Pah-tsze-nau. It was pleasant to meet the converts once more, and to find that they were all standing firm in the faith. Some were absent, having been driven from their homes by the floods, from which the whole district of Tien-Men had suffered so severely this year. The water had been in our chapel some feet in depth, but we were glad to find it dry again, and looking so neat and clean. Most of the afternoon and evening was spent in talking to the converts, preaching to the heathen, and examining candidates for baptism. The next day was Sunday, and it was a day not to be forgotten. We began by preaching to the heathen; we then had a delightful service with the Christians, at which ten were baptized, and the Communion was administered. We brought with us some simple remedies, and

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most of the afternoon was given to the work of healing. In the evening the door was thrown open once more to the heathen; and the day's work was closed with a prayer meeting, which we all greatly enjoyed.

In former letters about the work at Pah-tsze-nau much is said about opposition on the part of the heathen. It is a joy to be able to say this time that the opposition has completely died down, and that our heathen neighbours are perfectly friendly. Our great enemy, Chen Yüen-tai, is quite cordial in his bearing towards the Christians. He has found out that the Gospel is good, and says that were it not for the opium habit he would join the Christian Church himself.

I was impressed this time with Pah-tsze-nau as a centre of influence. Being a market town of some size, and well situated, it is constantly visited by a large number of people from different parts of the district. Many go to the chapel, and hear the Gospel as preached by the native evangelist.

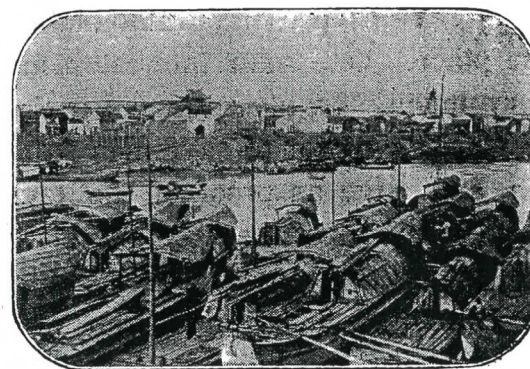
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Some purchase books, which they take with them to their distant homes. Four of the men baptized on Sunday belong to Tsing-tan, a market town just ten miles from Pah-tsze-nau. The four men are very satisfactory, but Mr. Yen King-tang, the leading man among them, is an exceptionally strong character. He told us that his thoughts were first turned towards Christianity by reading this year's Calendar, which gives the story of Moses and Israel's deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. He could not make very much out of it, but it arrested his attention, and when he came into contact with Mr. Yeh, our native preacher at Pah-tsze-nau, he found that it had prepared him for further instruction. If this man goes on well, he will become a great power for good at and around Tsing-tan.

Early on Monday we left Pah-tsze-nau for King-Shan. We intended to hurry on as fast as possible, but God willed it otherwise. When we reached Tsing-tan we found that the wind was dead

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against us, and that further progress was impossible. Mr. Yen King-tang and his three friends, who were baptized with him on the previous day, came to the boat at once, and insisted on our going on shore with them. We found Mr. Yen living in a fine, large house, and soon learned that he and his three friends are very well off so



HANKOW.

far as the things of this life are concerned. A crowd soon gathered, and we preached in Mr. Yen's house for some time. The town of Tsing-tan is on the other side of the river, and two of the four converts are living there. Arrangements had been made for a service in one of their houses. We crossed

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the river, and tried to carry out the plan proposed, but found it impossible. The house was far too small, and we were compelled to go into the street and hold an open-air service. We preached for nearly two hours to a very attentive and respectful congregation. Nothing could have been more courteous than their treatment of us, and this is to be ascribed in a large measure to Mr. Yen's personal influence at the place. One man interested me very much. In my sermon I spoke of Christ's power to save men from sin, and gave as proof of the fact some instances of the way gamblers and opium smokers had been saved in Hankow. This man, who was standing by my side, said: "That is my sin. If I could be convinced that Jesus can save the gambler, I would come and eat the religion too." I assured him that it was a fact, and exhorted him to come and try. After this we returned to Mr. Yen's house, where we found a very good feast prepared for the native assistants and ourselves. In the evening we had another service in

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Mr. Yen's house, at which a few inquirers from Peh-ho-kou, a place about a mile off, were present. There are several at Peh-ho-kou who wish to enter the Church, but we thought it best to put off their baptism for the present. I am convinced, however, that the Gospel has struck a new root in the district of King-Shan, and that the next visit to Tsing-tan will be to the missionary a time of great rejoicing.

We left Tsing-tan on Tuesday morning for King-Shan. On our arrival at Tsau-shih, on Wednesday, we learnt that seventeen of the converts had been there on the previous day to meet us, and to take us to Tsau-wu-kiai, a market town situated in the midst of the Christian villages. We had not to wait long before they made their appearance again, bringing with them four chairs for the two native assistants and ourselves. We were glad to see them; and they were evidently greatly delighted to see us. We started at once, and enjoyed the walking and riding immensely. The day was lovely, and King-Shan

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is a charming district to visit and work in. The ground is high, and the air is crisp and bracing—a perfect contrast in every way to Hankow. As we drew near Tsau-wu-kiai we were met by a number of Christians who had come out to welcome us. We were taken into the house which the Christians themselves have bought for holding meetings and other church purposes. There are other houses on the ground bought by them, but this is the largest. The ground and houses, which have cost them about 120 dols., have been made over to the Society. Having done so well themselves, we feel it to be our duty to help them to put the house in order.

No sooner did we enter the house than a great crowd of outsiders followed. They were determined to see and hear us, and every effort to put them off only made them the more eager; so we had to go and preach to them. It took a long time to satisfy their eyes and ears fully. The curiosity of all was great, but there were no signs of viciousness. The rest of the even-

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ing was spent in receiving the converts and examining the candidates for baptism. We examined twenty-three in all, and then sat down to tea. It was nine o'clock, and we had taken nothing since the early morning.

One of the candidates interested me greatly. His name is Hwang Sü-cheng, and a native of 'the Mien-Yang district. I asked him when he had heard the Gospel first. "More than ten years ago," was the reply. "From whom?" "From you, sir." "Where?" I asked again. "In the streets of Lou-tsei, in the district of Mien-Yang." He was asked to tell us all about it. Then he told us of my visit to Lou-tsei many years since, how he heard the Gospel on the occasion, how he received the truth with gladness, and how he resolved there and then never to worship idols again. It was worth going to King-Shan if only to hear Mr. Hwang's story of the way he had been brought to God. He is living at present at Yang-hing, a market town, about ten miles away from Tsau-wu-kiai,

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where he has been the means of influencing a number of people who are now seeking admission into the Church. The believers there are talking about buying a house with the view of converting it into a chapel.

On Thursday morning we started for the Chang village, where we had a service and fourteen baptisms. After the service we sat down to a sumptuous feast, prepared for us by Mr. Hung, one of the most earnest and warm-hearted converts in King-Shan. We then went to the Tang village, where we had another service and twelve baptisms. Here we had to consume another feast. We then returned to Tsau-wu-kiai, hoping to rest awhile, and thus have a quiet service with the converts. But there was no rest for us. Our heathen neighbours came in crowds to see and hear us, and we were compelled to preach to them for about two hours. Having satisfied them, we had our service with the Christians, at the close of which twenty-nine were baptized. This was a

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very laborious day in many ways; but the joy of it was unspeakable.

On Friday morning we had a short service before starting for Shih-Pan-ho, when two women were baptized. These women would have been baptized the previous night, but failed to attend. Shih-Pan-ho is a large market town, about six miles from Tsau-wu-kiai. Here we have just purchased a large house, which we are turning into a chapel, a dwelling-house for the native assistant and his family, and a resting-place for the foreign missionary. It will be a gift to the Society. The country between Tsau-wu-kiai and Shih-Pan-ho is exceedingly picturesque, and I have seldom enjoyed anything more than the ride to and fro. Being a market day, the place was full of people, and the excitement was very great. No sooner was it known that two foreigners had arrived than there was a tremendous rush into the house. We tried to hold forth in the house, but found it impossible to go on. The crowd was too

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great and noisy. There was nothing for it but to leave the house, and preach in the open air. Having found a large open space behind the house, we began to preach there. The audience was very large, and, to my surprise, very attentive also. Having preached for about an hour, the crowd quieted down, and we returned to the house to continue the work there. There was still a certain amount of excitement and a great deal of curiosity; but the rush was gone, and the audience had become quite manageable. The evening was spent in examining the candidates for baptism, the majority of whom we found to be very satisfactory. One of the candidates, named Hwang Chen-hing, greatly interested me. He told us that a colporteur visited the place about two years ago, and that he bought three tracts from him. He took them home, read them carefully, and became a believer in Christ. He cast off his idolatry at once, and has never worshipped idols since. When he

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came in contact with the native preacher, he made himself known to him as a believer, and expressed a desire to join the Christian Church. I put several questions to him on one of the three books which he had read, and was delighted to find that his knowledge of its contents was perfect. On Saturday morning he brought to me two of the three books referred to, and they are now in my possession. The other had been loaned to a heathen friend, who is now reading it.

On the following day, Saturday, we began by preaching to the heathen. We then had a deeply interesting service with the Christians, when thirteen men, ten women, and eleven children were baptized. In the afternoon we returned to Tsau-wu-kiai, and there spent the Sunday.

On Sunday morning we had a remarkable service. The place was crowded with Christians and inquirers, and they conducted themselves with a decorum and a reverence that would have done credit

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to any home congregation. On Sunday evening we had another delightful service, at which several of the converts prayed, and prayed in such a way as to make me feel that communion with God in prayer had become a great reality to them. Let me add that the con-



DR. GRIFFITH JOHN.

verts who have met these two days represent more than forty villages and hamlets.

Monday morning, early, we left Tsau-wu-kiai for Hankow. I need hardly say that we left the place with hearts full of wonder and gratitude. The kindness of the

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King-Shan Christians I shall never forget, neither can I forget their earnestness and zeal. The work in King-Shan is a surprise even to me, though I have been working in China for forty years. I rejoice over it greatly, but I rejoice with trembling.

On this visit we have had 91 baptisms in King-Shan, of whom 60 are adult converts from heathenism. In Tien-Men we have had 10 baptisms, of whom 9 are adult converts. In the two districts the baptisms have been 101, of whom 70 are adult converts. It has never been my privilege to baptize so many within one week before. This work in King-Shan is not quite two years old, and the first baptisms were administered in October of last year. Within these thirteen months there have been in all 159 baptisms, of whom 108 are adult converts. The number, however, would have been much larger had all the applicants been received. We have left many waiting, and there are not a few who, though not

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candidates, are standing at the door. In fact, it is difficult to see to what this work in King-Shan is going to grow. There have been Roman Catholic converts in this part of the district for generations. But they have not been getting along well with their neighbours, and their number is not increasing. We are to-day more numerous than they, though our work has only just begun.*

There are certain things with which I have been greatly impressed on this journey.

(1) I have been impressed with the importance of missionary touring and preaching to the heathen. I

* In a subsequent letter to the Foreign Secretary, Dr. John writes:—"You will be glad to hear of our great work in King-Shan. It is wonderful. Since writing to Mr. Cousins, a party of three have been to see me from Yung-ling Chen, in the King-Shan district, with deeds of house and land, representing a gift to the Society of property valued at 200 dols. These three men represent the Christians at that place. It looks as if we might have several applications of this kind within the next year or so. Was it not worth staying in China to *start* and *lead* on this work in King-Shan?"—ED.

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have mentioned the case of Hwang Sü-cheng, and I might mention other cases of equal interest. One man, a B.A. in the Confucian school, appeared at Tsau-wu-kiai as a candidate for baptism. From him I learnt the interesting fact that he was present at the services held by me at Mr. Tung Tsing-Kwan's house about fifteen years ago, and that it was then he received his first impressions of the truth. I am confident that the preaching to the heathen on this visit to King-Shan has produced a most salutary impression. Many a dark mind has been illumined, and many false impressions have been removed. I was deeply touched by a visit from two opium sots late on Sunday night. One of them was carrying an opium lamp, suspended from a string. In the dim light of the lamp they looked like half-man, half-ghost. They had been listening to the preaching, and wanted to know how they could get to Hankow and be saved. It was a touching sight. The difference between the

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Protestant missionary and the Roman Catholic priest with regard to the point is very great, and the people notice it. The Bishop of Hupeh had just passed through Shih-Pan-ho, on a pastoral visit to his flock in these parts; but the heathen saw nothing of him. It was interesting to listen to their conversation among themselves about the difference between the pastors and the priests. "The pastors preach," they would say; "the priests don't preach. The pastors throw their doors open; the priests close them. The pastors admit us into their presence and talk with us; the priests will have nothing to do with outsiders, and even the converts are not allowed to approach them without kneeling. The pastors have a doctrine to preach; the priests have nothing," etc., etc.

(2) I have been impressed with the importance of colportage work by the native colporteurs. I have given two instances of good done by it in this letter, and I could give many more. The Christian

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Press in China has become a mighty power, and nowhere more so than in Hupeh.

(3) I have been impressed with the value of native evangelists. The importance of the missionary's influence in connection with the work in Tien-Men and King-Shan is patent enough to any one who knows anything about it. In fact, it has been exceptionally great. But the real workers have been Messrs. Hiung, Wei, and Yeh; without them we could have done nothing. It has been a great joy to hear one candidate after the other mention these men as God's agents in bringing them into the knowledge of His truth. They have been working wisely and well, and God has blessed their labours abundantly. There has been a tendency in recent years to disparage native agency as a factor in the evangelization of China. I have always attached the greatest value to it, and my appreciation of its worth has never been higher than it is to-day. Still, I feel deeply that the native

evangelist cannot do without the foreign pastor to guide and inspire. The converts also need the foreign pastor in many ways, and especially as an instructor. The native evangelist can do much towards bringing men into the fold, but the foreign pastor is needed to tend and feed the flock.

(4) I have been impressed with the importance of the medical department of the work. The attempt to combine preaching and dispensing on the missionary journeys has its drawbacks. The medicine is almost sure to become the centre of attraction, and the demand for it is so great that one finds it almost impossible to keep the medical department within proper bounds and prevent it from becoming the one thing thought of and talked about. Still, I feel sure that we did well in taking a few remedies with us on this trip, and that not simply on account of the physical good accomplished, but also on account of the moral impression produced. Many seemed very grateful for help received, and all were favour-

ably impressed with the benevolent character of our work. Mr. Bonsey did all the doctoring in both Tien-Men and King-Shan; and the patience displayed by him in dealing with the impatient and importunate applicants is beyond all praise.

(5) I have been greatly impressed with the friendliness of the people everywhere. At both Tsau-wu-kiai and Shih-Pan-ho I asked my hearers repeatedly if they objected to our opening chapels and settling among them, and the answer invariably was: "Object! Why should we object? Is not the doctrine you preach a good doctrine?" We were always accosted in the most courteous language; and though we had to deal again and again with immense crowds of people who had never seen a foreigner before, we were not molested in the least, or even insulted. I have often said that the *people* of China are not against us; and I say it again, and I do so with new emphasis. Here everything depends upon the attitude which the authorities assume

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towards us. Of late the magistrates of these two districts have been quite friendly in their bearing, and just now it is the policy of all the officials in the province, from the Viceroy down, to keep the peace. Before we left Hankow the pastor wrote to the magistrates of Tien-Men and King-Shan, informing them of our intended visit, and requesting them to give us every necessary protection. On our arrival at Tsau-wu-kiai I found that a proclamation had been received from the King-Shan magistrate, and put up in the chapel. The magistrate states that the proclamation is issued at the request of his superior; and that its purport is to inform the people that the missionaries have a perfect right to open chapels and propagate the Gospel in the interior, and to warn all against interfering with them or troubling them in any way. A more satisfactory document of its kind has never been issued by any magistrate. At Tsau-wu-kiai an effort was made by a few of the gentry to keep us out of the place, and a petition was

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presented to the magistrate with this object in view. The magistrate, however, declined to receive it and simply warned the petitioners against interfering with us. The magistrate's secretary, a native of Tsau-wu-kiai, sent word to the leading men of his clan to the effect that if any disturbance was got up in connection with us, he could not and would not do anything to help them out of their difficulties. The official attitude towards us will account for the perfect peace we are enjoying in King-Shan. Had it been different, the bearing of the people would have been different, and the work in that district would have had a very different history. Whenever we have trouble in China, you may take it for granted that the officials or gentry, or both, are at the bottom of it.

I have written a long letter, much longer than I intended; but the half has not been told. Many will be glad to know that, in spite of riots and massacres and outrages of every kind, God's work in China is

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moving on. We have had dark days this year, and our faith has been much tried once and again. But there is no room for despair. God is here, working in all things and through all things. The brighter day is coming, and it may be nearer than we think.

"God works in all things ; all obey
His first propulsion from the night.
Wake thou and watch ! the world is grey
With morning light."

Yours very sincerely,

GRIFFITH JOHN.

P.S.—Arrived at Hankow on the 16th. All well in the Mission.—
G. J.



LETTER II

HANCHWAN, *April 1st*, 1896

DEAR MR. COUSINS,—



A brief account of a visit to our stations in the districts of Tien-Men and King-Shan may interest you. I am writing on board the boat, and under certain difficulties. Please, then, make due allowance for all imperfections.

Mr. Bonsey and myself left Hankow early in the morning of the 12th ult., and we reached Pah-tsze-nau on the 15th. The aspect of the country this year is very different from what it was in November of last year. Then the whole of the lake country was flooded, and we seemed to be sailing over a vast

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inland sea. Now the water is unusually low, the lakes and creeks are very shallow, and the boat, though drawing only a foot of water, has to push its way through the ubiquitous mud. As a consequence our progress has been extremely slow both to and fro.

On our arrival at Pah-tsze-nau we were welcomed by a large number of converts. The whole afternoon was given to examining candidates for baptism. A list of more than seventy names was put into our hands by Mr. Yeh, our native evangelist in Tien-Men; but we examined only those with whom he expressed himself as satisfied. In the evening we had a very good service with the Christians, when twenty-three were baptized, of whom sixteen are adult believers. One of the baptized is a scholar, who was impressed by the preaching on our previous visit. Another is a man of considerable means, and likely to become a centre of influence in the part of the district to which he belongs. We had excellent opportunities of preaching

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to the heathen. On Monday morning the chapel was filled for hours; and more attentive and respectful congregations I have never preached to. There is a great work going on in the Tien-Men district. It is spreading in every direction, and with a rapidity that makes me feel anxious as well as thankful.

On Sunday night I had a new experience. An attempt was made to rob our boat, and two umbrellas were actually stolen. Had I not been waked up by the movements of the thieves, a cleaner sweep would have been made of our belongings. Last year there was a great flood in the districts of Tien-Men. There is much famine everywhere, and thieves and robbers are numerous in consequence. This will probably account for the visit paid to us on this occasion. It is the first time that I have been troubled by thieves in my wanderings in China.

We left Pah-tsze-nau about noon on Monday, and made a good run to Peh-hu-kou, which we reached on Tuesday afternoon. But for the



CHANG CHIH-TUNG, VICEROY OF HUPEH AND
HUNAN.

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shallowness of the water in the lake we would have got over easily and reached Tsau-Shih early on Wednesday. Our boat draws about one foot of water, whilst the lake gave us only about six inches. We tried hard to make our way through the mud, and succeeded in doing a quarter of a mile in two hours. Then the night came on, and we had to anchor. Presently the wind changed, and by the morning it was blowing furiously. There was nothing for it but to turn back, and lodge in the creek from which we came. Here we were compelled to stay for three days. Wednesday was a bitterly cold day. Thursday it rained, hailed, snowed, and thundered from morning till night. On Friday the wind was so piercing and cutting that I had to take refuge in my *p'ukai* (Chinese bedding). On Tuesday morning and afternoon it was so hot that life in the boat was beginning to feel oppressive. The change came on suddenly after sunset, and for three days we lived a North Pole life. On Saturday morning we started again. During

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the night it froze hard, and we found the lake covered with ice about a quarter of an inch thick. This we had to break up as we moved along. Our speed, as you may imagine, was snail-pace, and something less. We did, however, manage to reach Tsau-Shih before sunset.

On our arrival at Tsau-Shih we found four chairs waiting us from Mr. Yang Yung-fah. Presently Mr. Yang himself came on board to invite us to his house. We went in chairs, and spent a very pleasant evening with him and his aged father. He gave us a sumptuous feast—certainly one of the best I have ever had in China. I have known Mr. Yang for more than two years. He is the chief among the gentry at Tsau-Shih, and well to do. When I found out that he was an opium-smoker, I pressed him to come to Hankow and be cured. His father, an old man of eighty-three, urged him to accept my invitation. In November last he came, and was completely cured. Whilst at the hospital he attended

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all the services, and left in possession of a good knowledge of the Truth, and entirely biassed in its favour. Both father and son are extremely grateful to us for the kindness and benefits received at the hospital, and are doing all in their power to show their appreciation. It is our intention to open a chapel at Tsau-Shih, and Mr. Yang is helping us in every possible way. There are many houses offering, and it is our intention to buy one of them at once. A house at Tsau-Shih is absolutely necessary in order to complete our arrangements for, and carry on, our work efficiently in the district of Tien-Men and King-Shan. Here will be, in all probability, the headquarters of the foreign missionaries appointed to take charge of the work in these two districts. From Tsau-Shih both Tien-Men and King-Shan can be easily and efficiently worked. The change in Tsau-Shih is wonderful. It used to be a little Hunan in Hupeh. Now a visit to Tsau-Shih is perfectly safe and pleasant.

The next morning we started

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early for Tsau-wu-kiai. Being a market day, the place was crowded with people from the surrounding country, and a tremendous crowd followed me to the chapel. I did not venture further than the door. I turned round and asked them to follow me to a spot outside the town, where I would preach to them. Some two or three hundred followed, and two of the native evangelists and myself preached to them for about two hours. Whilst this work was going on in the open-air, Mr. Bonsey and another native helper were carrying on a similar work in the chapel. We then had a service with the Christians. The chapel was full of converts—members and candidates for membership. Then came the examination of the candidates. We examined twenty-three, and were much pleased with most of them. We had another service in the evening, when eleven adult believers were baptized. This was a laborious day, and a day full of joy and gratitude.

Next morning, after an early feast given us by some of the con-

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verts at Tsau-wu-kiai, we started for Shih-Pan-ho, a market town about five miles distant. On our way we had to partake of another sumptuous feast prepared for us by Mr. Fung, one of our deacons. We arrived at Shih-Pan-ho about six o'clock in the evening. A large crowd was awaiting us, and we had to preach in the open air before entering the house. They behaved well, however, and we had a quiet time with them. In the evening we saw a large number of candidates. A goodly number had to be put off for the next visit; others we did not examine, the native evangelist not being satisfied with them. The house at Shih-Pan-ho is large, and Mr. Wei, our native assistant, has succeeded in making it a capital place for our purpose.

The next morning we had a remarkably good service. The large chapel was well filled with Christians and inquirers. Thus were baptized in all thirty-three persons, of whom twenty-seven are adult believers. After the baptisms the Communion was administered—the

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first time ever administered in King-Shan by a Protestant missionary. In the evening we had another very helpful service, conducted by our evangelist, Mr. Chen. Others spoke, and spoke well. I don't think this day will soon be forgotten by the King-Shan Christians.

Early on Wednesday morning we started for a large village, distant from Shih-Pan-ho about four miles, called Sie-Kia-ta-wan. On the way we were compelled to partake of an excellent feast at the house of one of our converts. The ride to the Sie-Kia village was simply delightful. The King-Shan district is famous for its beautiful scenery, and the bit through which we passed on that day we felt to be very charming. When we reached the village, we found that a platform had been erected for preaching. Mr. Bonsey, Mr. Tien, and myself preached for about two hours to a congregation of some four or five hundred people. It was interesting to see the people coming in from the surrounding villages to hear us. They listened well, and

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treated us with the greatest respect. After the open-air preaching, we had a service in the house of Mr. Sie, when twenty-one were baptized in all—eleven adults and ten children. Then came another feast, and, after the feast, more preaching to the heathen. We were escorted back to Shih-Pan-ho in chairs, where we arrived about sunset. The work of the day was finished up with a prayer meeting, attended by a large number of Christians.

The next morning about ten o'clock we left Shih-Pan-ho for Yung-Hing-Cheng, a market town distant from the latter place about twelve miles. It is now sixteen years since I visited this part of King-Shan for the first time. One of the most remarkable Sundays I have ever spent in China was spent there. It was my hope that the work commenced then would go on and grow; but in this I was disappointed. The men on whom I built my hopes failed us, and the work collapsed. Of late a new and deeply interesting work has sprung up there, and it is an interesting

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fact to me that this work, though not a development of the work of sixteen years ago, is intimately related to it.

The converts of Yung-Hing-Cheng sent two chairs, a pony, and several donkeys to bring us thither. We passed through a lovely country, and I enjoyed the walking and the riding immensely. I was often reminded of my beloved Wales, and my thoughts were often there, as one view after another opened up before my eyes. On our arrival we received a very warm welcome from our hosts, Mr. Lei Yeh-kau and his brother, Lei Teh-tau. After partaking of a feast at the brother's house, we went to the town, where we preached in the open air to a large and attentive audience. The evening was spent in examining candidates, and it looked at one time as if it would never come to an end. We were at it till midnight, and even then the work was not finished. We were very much struck with the knowledge of the Truth evinced by the candidates, and often wondered where they had

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got it all from. The converts must have been very diligent in teaching each other. We were specially pleased with an old man of sixty-one and a little boy of eight. The old man heard me preach on my visit sixteen years ago, and was impressed then. His knowledge of the Truth is remarkable. He is also a man of means and influence. The little boy greatly astonished us with his brightness and intelligence. He answered every question with perfect accuracy and without the least hesitation. Three of the candidates are scholars—one a graduate, and two undergraduates. The graduate, also, was among my hearers on the occasion already referred to, and he has been reading Christian books ever since. Our host is a very fine young fellow, and so is his brother. Both are respectable farmers, and evidently much respected by their neighbours. Taking them all in all, the candidates of Yung-Hing-Cheng are as satisfactory as any candidates I have ever had to deal with.

On the following morning we

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had a most impressive service at the house of our host, Mr. Lei Yeh-kau, when thirty-three were baptized in all, of whom twenty-eight are adult believers. After the service we were invited to a feast by Mr. Psai-Yung-tang, the old man of sixty-one to whom I have already referred. He asked the blessing himself, and I was very much struck with the patriarchal way he did it. Nothing could have been more appropriate or more beautiful. We then went to the town and had some more open-air preaching. We have a house in the town, which has been given to the Mission by a few of the wealthier converts. But it has not yet been fitted up, and if it had been we could not have used it for public preaching on this occasion, being altogether too small for our audiences. There is another house in the place which is much larger. We have suggested to the converts that they should exchange this for that. If they succeed in making the exchange, we will help them to fit it up, and our services, the next time we visit the place,

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will be held in it. And here I may just state that the house at Tsau-wu-kiai and the house at Yung-Hing-Cheng are gifts to the Mission from the converts. They have cost them 300 dols. A very handsome gift, I think.

We left Yung-Hing-Cheng the next morning for Tsau-Shih, and in the afternoon we left Tsau-Shih for home, which we hope to reach tomorrow.

No sooner did we arrive at Tsau-Shih than our kind friend, Mr. Yang Yung-fah, called on us with a present of fowls, fish, and eggs. He also went with us to see some houses, and in every way identified himself with us and our interests. It is wonderful how friendly these people can be when once you win their confidence and affection. The kindness of the converts on this visit has greatly impressed me with its reality and heartiness.

The baptisms on this visit stand thus:—

	Adults.	Children.	In all.
For Tien-Men ...	16	7	23
For King-Shan ...	77	21	98
	—	—	—
	93	28	121

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These are the pick of the candidates. We might have baptized twice or three times as many.

It would surprise you to see the number of idols that have been given up in King-Shan and Tien-Men. Most of them have been chopped up for firewood; but I have brought a goodly number with me to show to the Hankow Christians. If you would like to have them, it will give me much pleasure to send them on to the Mission House.*

But the enemy is at work, and I am feeling somewhat anxious. The Roman Catholics in these two districts have been having it all their own way till now. Our advent seems to have raised their hatred, and they are now doing all they can to obstruct our work and injure our converts. It is my intention to call on the Bishop as soon as possible after my arrival at Hankow, and try to come to an understanding with him with regard to the matter. I hope to find

* These have been received at the Mission House.—ED.

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him reasonable and willing to put an end to the evil.

Let me urge the claims of Tien-Men and King-Shan on the Directors. If the work continues to grow, as it now promises to do, we shall have thousands of converts in these two districts in the near future. There have been more than 250 baptisms in King-Shan alone since October, 1894, and there are hundreds there now waiting to be baptized. The harvest, indeed, is great, but the labourers are few. Will you not send us two men at once for these two districts?*. I don't ask for two men for each, but for both. Surely that is not asking too much, considering the claims of the work. The men sent should be unmarried, and one should be a doctor. Do what you can for us, and the converts of that region will join us in blessing you.

Yours faithfully,

GRIFFITH JOHN.

* One has gone to take up this work, and the Directors hope soon to be able to secure the doctor asked for.—ED.



LETTER III

TSAU-SHIH,

December 9th, 1896

DEAR MR. COUSINS,—



It is exactly four weeks since Mr. Bonsey and myself left Hankow for Tien - Men and King - Shan. We are now on our way back, and hope to reach home on Saturday. These four weeks have been weeks full of work and joy. We have travelled much, and have seen much to cheer our hearts. The people everywhere have been perfectly friendly, and the converts have been extremely hospitable. The weather also has been highly propitious; not a day has been lost on account of heavy rains and adverse winds. Physically this journey has done me much good.

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I left Hankow feeling far from well; I am returning greatly braced up in body and soul. We have spent much time in the open air, and the pure air of King-Shan has a most exhilarating and invigorating effect upon me. In King-Shan I always feel as if the land of my childhood was not far off.

The progress of the work in Tien-Men and King-Shan is very encouraging. On this visit there have been baptized in the two counties 202 persons in all—adults, 147; non-adults, 55. Among the non-adults there are many bright and promising lads. On our previous visit the two counties gave us 121 baptisms—adult, 93; non-adult, 28. Thus in one year it has been my great joy to administer the ordinance of baptism to 323 persons in this one portion of our sphere in Central China. That is a new thing in my missionary experience.

These new converts are for the most part farmers. Many of them are well to do, and none of them are helpless. Some of them are

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scholars, among whom there are two or three who are likely to develop into valuable helpers as teachers and Evangelists. Some of the most respectable and substantial men in all this region are now in the Church.

As Christians I am extremely pleased with the converts of Tien-Men and King-Shan. They are comparatively strong and warm-hearted. They are also remarkably fearless and straightforward in their dealings with each other. They seem to have the purity of the Church at heart, and are inclined to be severe in their treatment of an offender. I have never known Chinese Christians show so much generosity in their treatment of the missionary. When travelling from station to station, we are never allowed to walk. Chairs, ponies, donkeys, and coolies are provided for us everywhere. To offer payment would be deemed an insult by them. As to feasting, there is no end to it. On this visit, as on every previous visit, they simply loaded us with kind-

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ness all the time we were with them.

The work is spreading on every hand. On this visit six new stations have been opened, at each of which a good and important work is going on. On our next visit we shall doubtless start work at other centres, for there is a widespread interest in the Truth, and the movement towards Christianity is growing every day.

The progress in these two counties is to be ascribed mainly to native agency. We have only two paid native agents in both; but they are earnest men, wholly consecrated to Christ, and ever active in the work of making Him known to their fellow-countrymen. Much of the progress is to be ascribed to the energy and efficiency of these two men. But they could not have accomplished very much without the help of the converts; for the area of operation is so extensive, and the candidates so numerous. Two men could not have taught all the men, women, and children who came before us as candidates. It

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was, then, a great joy to find that much of the teaching had been done by the converts themselves. Some names stood out very prominently as Christian workers. One is a scholar of great promise. One is a poor fellow greatly afflicted with elephantiasis, but burning with zeal for the salvation of men. One is a reformed gambler, who once was the curse of his family, but is now the pride and joy of all its members. One is an aged woman, who was a vegetarian for many years, but is now going about from house to house and village to village, telling the women of Christ and His saving grace. At one of the new stations we were struck with the intelligence of the women, and could not account for it. We asked our native assistant, Mr. Yeh, for an explanation. His reply was: "When I got hold of this old lady, I devoted my time to her and taught her, in order that she might teach others. Ever since she has been busy teaching her neighbours, and the result is what you see to-day." I might mention several

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others who have been real helpers to the native preachers in propagating the Truth in these parts. I look upon this as one of the most encouraging features in connection with the movement.

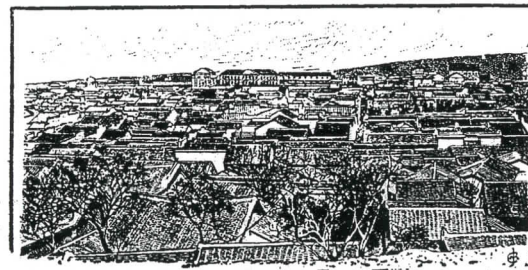
Of the new stations the most important is Tsau-Shih. Tsau-Shih is a large town in the county of Tien-Men. Three counties—Tien-Men, King-Shan, and Ying-Cheng—meet here, and this makes Tsau-Shih a place of considerable importance. It is also notorious for its bad name as one of the rowdiest places in this Province. To the missionary it used to be a dangerous place to visit—a veritable little Hunan in the midst of Hupeh. Mr. Sparham and myself were the first to preach the Gospel in its streets, and both of us carry with us a lively recollection of the experience through which we passed on that occasion. Till about four years since Tsau-Shih was practically closed to the missionary and his message. About that time, however, the magistrate of Tien-Men paid me a visit at Hankow,

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and gave me a cordial invitation to visit him at Tien-Men. I did so, and managed, through him, to gain a peaceful access to Tsau-Shih. Mr. Terrell was with me on that occasion. We walked up and down the streets with impunity, and preached to the crowds without the least fear of molestation. I have visited the place once or twice every year since, and have not had the least difficulty in managing the people. We have friends among the gentry even, and Mr. Yang Yung-Fah, the head of the gentry, identifies himself with us in every possible way. Unfortunately he has two wives; but for this he would have been in the Church long ago. Tsau-Shih is perfectly tame now, and the people are delightfully friendly. Last year I received an invitation from the gentry to come and establish a Mission at Tsau-Shih, and ever since we have been trying to find suitable premises. Any number of houses have been offering, but none seemed to be exactly what we wanted. On this

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visit we have been making another attempt, and I am glad to be able to say that the attempt has proved successful. We have bought a fine piece of land, with four houses on it. The houses are small, and not in good order; but the land is everything we could desire. It is a beautiful site—high, dry, and



WU-CHANG.

open, and commanding a splendid view of the King-Shan hills. The open country is in the immediate vicinity, and not far off are the King-Shan hot springs and baths. The spot is all that could be desired for a Mission compound—the very place for our dwelling-houses and hospital. Here the missionaries ought to live in the enjoyment of good health and high spirits. Would that we had any-

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thing like this charming site for our Mission compound at Hankow!

Tsau-Shih will make a fine centre for our missionary operations in Tien-Men and King-Shan. It commands both, and every part of both can be easily reached from it. Our existing stations are all around Tsau-Shih, and we have converts in the town itself. I bless God that He has given me to see the opening of Tsau-Shih, and the extension of the Mission into these parts; and I bless Him, too, because He has permitted me to have a share in the important task of bringing both to pass. Most sincerely do I congratulate Mr. Robertson and his colleague, whose privilege it will be to take charge of God's work in Tien-Men and King-Shan. Were it the Master's will, I should be only too glad to make a third.

In my letter which I wrote you on my return from my last visit to Tien-Men and King-Shan I just mentioned the fact that we were having trouble with the Roman Catholics. The trouble sprang from envy, and a strong desire to check

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our progress in these two counties. I am glad to be able to inform you now that we have come to an understanding with the Father in charge of Tien-Men and King-Shan, and that I do not apprehend any further complications of a serious nature. I was determined, if possible, to prevent our disputes coming before the heathen magistrate, and to do all in my power to bring the Bishop and Fathers to see matters in my own light. With this end in view we paid one visit to the Bishop at Wanchang and several visits to the Fathers at Hankow. It was proposed to them that all difficulties between the converts of the two Churches should be amicably settled by ourselves, and that, if possible, no case should be taken to the Wamen. It has taken several months to bring matters round to this point, but after many interviews and much correspondence our efforts have been crowned with success. Whilst in the King-Shan district we had three interviews with Father Codici, when certain grievances were quietly discussed

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and settled. He was evidently as anxious to come to an understanding with us as we were with him; and I feel pretty sure that it will be his aim as well as ours to keep the peace between the two flocks in the future. I could write a long and interesting chapter on the nature and history of our recent troubles with the Roman Catholics; but it is not necessary. Now that matters are quietly and satisfactorily settled, silence is best.

During our stay at Yung-Hing Cheng, one of our stations in King-Shan, we visited Kwan-Yin Ngai, a celebrated Buddhist temple, dedicated to Kwan-Yin, the goddess of mercy and the giver of children. Tens of thousands of pilgrims from all the surrounding counties resort to this famous shrine in the second and eighth months of every year. In March last we met hundreds of them on their way to and fro. They go in bands, marching in single file, perfectly silent, and all eyes fixed on the ground. I saluted them once or twice, but there was no response, neither would they

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look to the right or to the left. On the way thither they are in mortal fear lest by word or look some sin might be committed, and thereby the blessing be withheld. No sooner is the worship over, however, than all this solemnity passes away, and on the homeward journey the pilgrims are just as merry and talkative as they can well be.

The blessings sought are never of a spiritual nature. Wealth, health, longevity, sons, a prosperous year—such are the favours desired. Contrition for sin, confession of sin, longing for deliverance from the power and guilt of sin, adoring gratitude, spiritual communion with the object of worship—these elements, and elements such as these, never enter into the composition of their religion. The Chinese are a shrewd, practical, commercial people, and never more so than in their religious performances. In the temple as well as in the shop, they have a steady eye to business. They bargain with their gods just as they do with each other, and their religion is a purely com-

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mercial transaction. They spend so much on candles, incense, mock-money, and other offerings, and they expect to get so much in return. "If the little penny does not go, the big penny will not come." That is the principle which inspires the whole religious life of the Chinaman. He spends so much on his god, and expects to get more. If the big penny does not come, the worshipper becomes angry, and sometimes vents his wrath in no very polite terms. The Chinaman's religion is of the earth earthy. There is nothing noble or ennobling in it or about it.

And the priesthood is corrupt and corrupting. At Kwan-yin Ngai there are scores of Buddhist priests, all living on the offerings of the pilgrims. We spoke to several of them, and found them all to be opium smokers. A more disreputable looking lot of men I have not seen for many a day. One had only to look at them in order to be convinced of the truth of the reports concerning them, and the low, idle, immoral lives led by them. And

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such is the Buddhist priesthood the land all over. Let those who are enamoured with the Buddhistic faith come to China, and see it in full working order. Let them go with me, and visit the temples and monasteries; and let me have the pleasure of introducing them to the living representatives of the "Light of Asia." Let them do this, and the disenchantment will be quick and thorough. Buddhism, as it dropped from the lips of its founder, is atheism pure and simple; and Buddhism, as it is seen in China to-day, is a system of gross superstition and senseless idolatry. It is utterly corrupt and degrading. It has had its day, and must cease to be.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Directors for the hearty way they have taken up my appeal for two men for Tien-Men and King-Shan. I also wish to tender my best thanks to the friend who has undertaken the entire support of one of the two, and to the several friends who have unitedly guaranteed the support of the other for a number

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of years. I trust the above account of the progress of the work in these two counties will interest them, and make them feel that no mistake has been made in investing so much of their capital in this enterprise. I cannot conceive of a safer or more profitable investment. Would that the hearts of many more might be moved to do likewise!

I am glad that Mr. Robertson is on his way to Hankow. But you must not stop till a doctor is found. We must have *two* men, and one must be a doctor. The converts in Tien-Men and King-Shan were delighted to hear that their pastor was on his way to China, and that the doctor would soon follow.

I wished to say something in this letter about the need of a college in Central China for the training of native preachers and pastors; but I cannot do more than refer to the subject now. The subject has been in my thoughts for many years, and my colleagues and myself have often talked over the matter. So far nothing definite has been done.

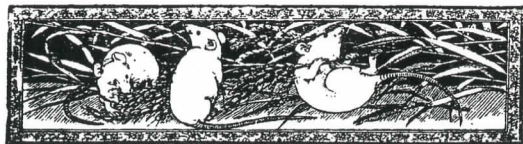
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The needs of the work, however, are becoming more and more pressing every day; and the question as to how to meet them is rapidly becoming the most vital of all the questions with which we have to deal. We must have more foreign Missionaries to occupy the new fields that are now opening before us on every hand. But do all you can in this respect, and China will still remain unevangelized, unless the native element is developed. A college for the training of native agents is becoming an absolute necessity. We must take the matter up as soon as possible, and you must make up your minds to give us every assistance in your power.

Yours sincerely,

GRIFFITH JOHN.

P.S.—HANKOW, *Dec. 14th*, 1896.
We have arrived safely and in good health. All well in the Mission. This is my birthday. "Praise the Lord, O my soul."—G. JOHN.



LETTER IV

TSAU-SHIH,
December 9th, 1896

DEAR MR. COUSINS,—



I hope you will find room for the enclosed in the *Chronicle*. The work in Tien-Men and King-Shan has reached now a definite point. The opening of Tsau-Shih rounds off the past, and we shall now be entering on a new period. If you add this letter to my former communications, the history of the starting of the movement in these two counties will be before you. I can't tell you how much I rejoice over this work; neither can I tell

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you how thankful I am that Robertson is coming out to take charge of it. Send us a doctor as soon as you can.*

* See Note on p. 45.



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