James Gilmour of Mongolia

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JAMES GILMOUR

OF MONGOLIA

BY

RICHARD LOVETT, M.A.

Author of "James Chalmers," etc.

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PREFACE

WHEN this record of the life and missionary work of James Gilmour was first published it received extraordinary attention from many sections of the press, and from all parts of the world there came striking testimonies as to the way in which it touched the hearts of Christian workers. It deepened their faith, strengthened their zeal, and nerved them for whole-hearted consecration to Christ.

At James Gilmour's death in 1891, at the comparatively early age of forty-eight, his colleague, the Rev. John Parker, continued the work of the Mission for many years. The Rev. J. D. Liddell went out to Mongolia in 1898, was driven out during the Boxer Rising, but remained in China until 1930. Dr Thomas Cochrane, who reached the Mission in 1897 and took charge of the Medical work, was compelled to return home on account of illness, but went out again to Peking in 1901 in order to take charge of the Medical Mission there. He founded the Union Medical College of which he became principal, and from 1909 to 1912 acted as Secretary of the Advisory Council for China.

About the beginning of 1902 the Irish Presbyterian Mission took over Ch'ao Yang and Ling Yuan, and worked the districts around those two cities, but in 1911 a request was made that the Brethren, who, since 1898, had been working in the southern part of Jehol Province, should also be responsible for these districts. In 1934

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they had thirty-two missionaries in that Province. Those who have done work in the plains of the North, where Gilmour first did so much, are Mr Sturt (who has made several journeys over these plains) and Dr and Mrs Shepherd, who, with Mr and Mrs R. E. Chow, are stationed at Lin Hsi; while Dr and Mrs Soutter and four other missionaries are in the district around Ch'ao Yang.

In February 1907, sixteen years after Gilmour's death, a remarkable testimony to the consistent life, effective preaching, and influence of this beloved missionary reached England in the shape of a communication from Liu Vi, one of his early converts, in which he speaks of the debt which he feels he owes to the faithful ministry of James Gilmour. The Rev. S. Evans Meech, L.M.S. missionary in North China from 1871 to 1921, writing on November 15, 1934, in his ninetieth year, says: "Liu Yi was first servant to Gilmour and while acting so was converted, and then helped him in his work in Ch'ao Yang, both in his treatment of the sick and preaching of the Gospel. Liu Yi afterwards came to Peking and studied medicine for some months at the Union Medical College. Returning to Ch'ao Yang he carried on valuable medical work and became known as Dr Liu."

Dr Cochrane, also in a letter dated November 15, 1934, says: "James Gilmour confined his attention in the last years of his life almost exclusively to Southern Inner Mongolia, and founded a work that became fruitful in the formation of little churches. In Inner Mongolia there are a good few workers, and all this can be looked upon as the fruit of Gilmour's pioneering efforts."

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JAMES GILMOUR

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS AND EDUCATION

James Gilmour, of Mongolia, the son of James Gilmour and Elizabeth Pettigrew his wife, was born at Cathkin on Monday, June 12, 1843. He was the third in a family of six sons, all but one of whom grew up to manhood. His father was in very comfortable circumstances, and consequently James Gilmour never had the struggle with poverty through which so many of his great countrymen have had to pass. Cathkin, an estate of half a dozen farms in the parish of Carmunnock, is only five miles from Glasgow, and was owned by Humphrey Ewing Maclae, a retired India merchant, who resided in the substantial mansion-house on the estate. There were also the houses of a few residents, and a smithy and wright's workshops, for the convenience of the surrounding district. James Gilmour's father was the occupant of the wright's shop, as his father had been before him.

His brother John, one of three who survived him, furnished the following interesting sketch of the family life in which James Gilmour was trained, and to which he owed so much of the charm and power which he manifested in later years:

"Our grandfather, Matthew Gilmour, combined the

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trades of mason and wright, working himself at both as occasion required; and our father, James Gilmour, continued the combination in his time in a modified degree, gradually discarding the mason trade and

developing the wright's. Grandmother (father's mother) was a woman of authority, skill, and practical usefulness among the little community in which she resided. In cases requiring medical treatment, she was always in request; and in order to obtain the lymph pure for the vaccination of children she would take it herself direct from the cow. She was also a neat and skilful needlewoman.

"Matthew Gilmour and his wife were people of strict integrity and Christian living. They walked regularly every Sunday the five miles to the Congregational Church in Glasgow, though there were several places of worship within two miles of their residence. I have often heard the old residents of the steep and rough country road they used to take, for a short cut when nearing home, tell how impressed they have been by the sight of the worthy couple and their family wending their way along in the dark winter Sabbath evenings by the light of a hand-lantern. Our parents continued the connection with the same body of worshippers in Glasgow as long as they resided in Cathkin, being members of Dr Ralph Wardlaw's church. It was under his earnest eloquence, and by his wise pastoral care, we were trained.

"The distance of our home from the place of worship did not admit of our attending as children any other than the regular Sabbath services; but we were not neglected in this respect at home, so far as it lay in our parents' ability to help us. We regularly gathered around our

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mother's knee, reading the impressive little stories found in such illustrated booklets as the *Teacher's Offering,* the *Child's Companion,* the *Children's Missionary Record* (Church of Scotland), the *Tract Magazine,* and Watts' *Divine Songs for Children.* These readings were always accompanied with touching serious comments on them by mother, which tended very considerably to impress the lessons contained in them on our young hearts. I remember how she used to add: 'Wouldn't it be fine if some of you, when you grow up, should be able to write such nice little stories as these for children, and do some good in the world in that way!' I have always had an idea that James's love of contributing short articles from China and Mongolia to the children's missionary magazines at home was due to these early impressions instilled into his mind by his mother. Father, too, on Sabbath evenings, generally placed the 'big' Bible (Scott and Henry's) on the table, and read aloud the comments therein upon some portion of Scripture for our edification and entertainment. During the winter week-nights some part of the

evening was often spent in reading aloud popular books then current, such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

"Family worship, morning and evening, was also a most regular and sacred observance in our house, and consisted of first, asking a blessing; second, singing twelve lines of a psalm or paraphrase, or a hymn from Wardlaw's Hymn-book; third, reading a chapter from the Old Testament in the mornings, and from the New in the evenings; and fourth, prayer. The chapters read were taken day by day in succession, and at the evening worship we read two verses each all round. This proved rather a

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trying ordeal for some of the apprentices, one or more of whom we usually had boarding with us, or to a new servant-girl, as their education in many cases had not been of too liberal a description. But they soon got more proficient, and if it led them to nothing higher, it was a good educational help. These devotional exercises were not common in the district in the mornings, and were apt to be broken in upon by callers at the wright's shop; but that was never entertained as an excuse for curtailing them. I suppose people in the district got to know of-the custom, and avoided making their calls at a time when they would have to -wait some little while for attention. Our parents, however, never allowed this practice or their religious inclinations to obtrude on their neighbours; all was done most unassumingly and humbly, as a matter of everyday course.

"While James was quite a child the family removed to Glasgow, where our father entered into partnership with his brother Alexander as timber merchants. During this stay in Glasgow mother's health proved very unsatisfactory, and latterly both she and father having been prostrated and brought to death's door by a malignant fever, it was decided to relinquish the partnership and return to their former place in the country. James was five years old at that time. When he was between seven and eight he was sent with his older brothers to the new Subscription School in Bushyhill, Cambuslang, a distance of two miles. Here he remained till he was about twelve, when he and I were sent to Gorbals Youths' School in Greenside Street, Glasgow. We had thus five miles to go morning and evening, but we had season-tickets for the

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railway part of the distance, namely, between Rutherglen and Glasgow. Thomas Neil was master of this school. We were in the private room,

rather a privileged place, compared with 'the rest of the school, seeing we received the personal attentions of Mr Neil, and were almost free from corporal punishment, which was not by any means the case in the public rooms of the school—Mr Neil being, I was going to say, a *terror to evildoers,* but he was in fact a terror to all kinds of doers, from the excitability of his temper and general sternness.

"Here James usually kept the first or second place in the class, which was a large one; and if he happened to be turned to the bottom (an event which occurred pretty often to all the members of the class with Mr Neil), he would determinedly endeavour to stifle a mournful 'cry,' thus demonstrating the state of his feelings at being so abased. But he never remained long at the bottom; like a cork sunk in water, he would rise at the first opportunity to his natural level at the top of the class. It was because of his diligence and success in his classes while at this school, I suppose, more than from any definite idea of what career he might follow in the future, that after leaving he was allowed to prosecute his studies at the Glasgow High School, where he gained many prizes, and fully justified his parents' decision of allowing him to go on with his studies instead of taking him away to a trade. At home he prosecuted his studies very untiringly both during session and vacation.

"After entering the classes of the Glasgow University he studied in an attic room, the window of which overlooked an extensive and beautiful stretch of the Vale of

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Clyde. I remember feeling compassion for him sometimes as he sat at this window, knowing what an act of self-denial it must have been to one so boisterous and full of fun as he was to see us, after our work was over of an evening, having a jolly game at rounders, or something of that sort, while he had to sit poring over his books.

> "James was not a serious, melancholy student; he was indeed the very opposite of that when his little intervals of recreation occurred. During the day he would be out about the workshop and sawmill, giving each in turn a poking and joking at times very tormenting to the recipients. If we had any little infirmity or weakness, he was sure to enlarge upon it and make us try to amend it, assuming the *rôle* and aspect of a drill-sergeant for the time being. He used to have the mid-finger of the right hand extended in such a way that he could nip and slap you with it very painfully. He used this finger constantly, to pound and drill his comrades, all being done of course in the height of glee, frolic, and good-humour. This finger, no doubt by the unlawful use to which he put it, at one time developed a painful tumour, to the delight of those who were in the habit of receiving punishment

from it. James pulled a long face, and acknowledged that it was a punishment sent him for using the finger in so mischievous a manner.

"There was a pond or dam in connection with the sawmill. In this James was wont to practise the art of swimming. I remember he devised a plan of increasing his power of stroke in the water. He made four oval pieces of wood rather larger than his hands and feet, tacking straps on one side, so that his hands and feet would slip

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tightly into them. But my recollection is that they were soon discarded as an unsuitable addition to his natural resources. He was fond of hunting after geological specimens, getting the local blacksmith to make him a pocket hammer to take with him on his rambles for that purpose. He seldom cared for company in these wanderings among the mountains, glens, and woods of his native place and country. He would start early in the morning, and accomplish feats of walking and climbing during the course of a day. Indeed, none of his brothers ever thought of asking James to go with them in their little holiday trips, knowing that anything not the conception of his own fancy was but very rarely acceptable to him; and he was never one who would pander to your gratification merely to please you.

"James was fond of boating. Once he hired a small skiff near the suspension-bridge at Glasgow Green, and proceeded with it up the river. Having gone a good way up, the idea appears to have taken him to endeavour to get the whole way to Hamilton, where, father having retired from business in 1866, our parents were now residing. This proved to be a very arduous task, as in a great many places on that part of the Clyde there is not depth of water to carry a boat. He managed, however, to accomplish the task by divesting himself of jacket, stockings, and shoes, and pulling the boat over all such shallow and rocky places (including the weir at Blantyre Mills, where the renowned African missionary and explorer, Dr Livingstone, worked in his boyhood), until he reached the bridge on, the river between Hamilton and Motherwell, a distance of eleven miles or more from

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Glasgow in a straight line, and much more following the numerous bends of the river. Here he made the boat secure and proceeded home, a distance of a mile, very tired and ravenously hungry. The great drawback to his satisfaction in this feat was his fear of the displeasure the boat-owner might feel at his not having returned the same night, and the rough usage to which he had subjected the boat in hauling it over the rocky places. He was much delighted, when he arrived with the boat down the river during the day, to find that the man was rather pleased than otherwise at his plucky exploit, telling him that he only remembered it being attempted once before.

"During part of the time James attended college at Glasgow University, the classes were at so early an hour that he could not take advantage of the railway, and so had to walk in the whole way. This was an anxious time for his mother, who was ever most particular in seeing to the household duties herself, and always careful that her children should have a substantial breakfast when they went from home. I remember some of those winter mornings. Amidst the bustle of making and partaking of an early breakfast so as to be on the road in time, mother would press him to partake more liberally of something she had thoughtfully prepared for him; he would ejaculate: 'Can't take it—no time!' and if she still insisted he would add in a solemn manner: '*Mother,* what if the door should be shut when I get there?' which, being understood by her as a scriptural quotation, was sufficient to quench her solicitations.

"To avoid the worry of getting up so early, it was decided after a time that he should take advantage of an

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unlet three or four apartment house in a tenement which belonged to father in Cumberland Street, Glasgow. So a couple of chairs, table, bed, and some cooking-utensils were got together, and James entered into possession, cooking his own breakfast, and getting his other meals there or outside as his fancy or inclination prompted. Here I think he enjoyed himself very much. He had plenty of quiet time for study, and he could roam about the city and suburbs for experience, recreation, and instruction, visiting mills and other large manufacturing industries as he was inclined.

"After our parents had removed to Hamilton, James took lodgings in George Street, a regular students' resort when the old college was in the High Street. It is now removed to the magnificent pile of buildings at Gilmorehill, in the western district of the city. The site of the old one in the High Street which James attended is now occupied by the North British and Glasgow and South-Western Railway Companies."

James Gilmour left England to begin his Mongolian lifework in February 1870, and then commenced keeping a diary, from which we shall often quote, and which he carefully continued amid, oftentimes, circumstances of the greatest difficulty until his death. He gives the following reasons for this practice at the time when he was living in a Mongol tent learning the language, hundreds of miles away from his nearest fellow-worker:

"I think it a special duty to my friends, specially my mother, to keep this diary, and to be particular in adding my state of mind in addition to my mere outward circum, stances. In my present isolated position, which may be

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more isolated soon, any accident might happen at any moment, after which I could not send home a letter, and I think that by keeping my diary punctually and fully my friends might have the melancholy satisfaction of following me to the grave, as it were, through my writing."

The Rev. H. R. Reynolds, D.D., for thirty-three years the honoured President of Cheshunt College, recalled some of his early recollections of James Gilmour.

"Though brusque and outspoken in manner, he was in many respects reserved and shy, and very slow to show or accept confidence. We all felt, however, that underneath a canny demeanour there was burning a very intense enthusiasm, and that a character of marked features was already formed, and would only develop along certain lines, settled, but not as yet fully disclosed to others.

"There was not a particle of make-believe in his composition. He shrank from praise, and was obviously anxious not to appear more reverential or wise or devoted than he knew himself to be. He even used, because it was natural to him, a rugged style of expression when speaking of things or persons or institutions which for the most part uplift our diction and generally induce us to adorn or make careful selection of our vocabulary. He rapped out expressions which might have suggested carelessness or irreverence or suppressed doubt, but I soon found that there was an intense fire of evangelistic zeal and an almost stormy enthusiasm for the conversion of souls to Christ.

"Some special services were held at Cheshunt Street Chapel, in which Gilmour took part, and the part was at least as demonstrative, perhaps more so, except the music, as that of the modern Salvation Army ensign or

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commissioner. He started from the chapel cntrance, on the Sunday evening, when considerable numbers were as usual parading the country street, and bare-headed approached every passer-by with some piquant, vigorous inquiry, or message or warning. In the main, his bold summons was, 'Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?' The entire population in the thoroughfare was stirred, and uncomplimentary jeers mingled with some awestruck impressions that were then produced.

"During the year 1869 he had those interviews with the late Mrs Swan, of Edinburgh, which led to his choice by the London Missionary Society, at her instance, to reopen the long-suspended mission in Mongolia. For a while he remained in Peking preparing himself by familiarity with the people, their ideas, their language, and religion, for those almost historic bursts into the great desert and across the caravan routes to the huge fairs, and the renowned temples, to the living lamas and famous shrines of the

nomadic Mongols, incessantly acting the part of travelling Hakim, itinerant book vendor, and fiery preacher of the Gospel of Christ."

James Gilmour was ordained as a missionary to Mongolia in Augustine Chapel, Edinburgh, on February 10, 1870, and, in accordance with Nonconformist custom, he made a statement about the development of his religious life from which we take the following extract:

"My conversion took place after I had begun to attend the Arts course in the University of Glasgow. I had gone to college with no definite aim as to preparing for a profession; an opportunity was offered me of attending classes, and I embraced it gladly, confident

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that whatever training or knowledge I might there acquire would prove serviceable to me afterwards in some way or other.

"After I became satisfied that I had found the 'way of life,' I decided to tell others of that way, and felt that I lay under responsibility to do what I could to extend Christ's kingdom. Among other plans of usefulness that suggested themselves to me was that of entering the ministry. But, in my opinion, there were two things that everyone who sought the office of the ministry should have, namely, an experimental knowledge of the truth which it is the work of the minister to preach, and a good education to help him to do it; the former I believed I had, the latter I hoped to obtain. So I quietly pursued the college course till I entered on the last session, when, after prayerful consideration and mature deliberation, I thought it my duty to offer myself as a candidate for the ministry.

"Having decided as to the capacity in which I should labour in Christ's kingdom, the next thing which occupied my serious attention was the *locality* where I should labour. Occasionally, before, I had thought of the relative claims of the home and foreign fields, but during the summer session in Edinburgh I thought the matter out, and decided for the mission field; even on the low ground of common sense I seemed to be called to be a missionary. Is the kingdom a harvest field? Then I thought it. reasonable that I should seek to work where the work was most abundant and the workers fewest. Labourers say they are over-taxed at home; what then must be the ease abroad, where there are wide stretching plains already white to harvest, with scarcely here and there a solitary reaper? To me the soul of an Indian seemed as precious as the soul of an Englishman, and the Gospel as much for the Chinese as for the European; and as the band of

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missionaries was few compared with the company of home ministers, it seemed, to me clearly to be my duty to go abroad.

"But I go out as a missionary not that I may follow the dictates of common sense, but that I may obey that command of Christ, '*Go into all the world*

and preach.' He who said '*preach,*' said also,, Go ye into and *preach,*' and what Christ hath joined together let not man put asunder.

"This command seems to me to be strictly a missionary injunction, and, as far as I can see, those to whom it was first delivered regarded it in that light, so that, apart altogether from choice and other lower reasons, my going forth is a matter of obedience to a plain command; and in place of seeking to assign a reason for going abroad, I would prefer to say that I have failed to discover any reason why I should stay at home."

On February 22, 1870, James Gilmour embarked at Liverpool upon the steamship *Diomed,* and thus fairly started on the work of his life. Among his extant correspondence is a long letter which describes the voyage to China, and the way in which he utilised the opportunities it afforded for trying to do his Master's will.

"We sailed from Liverpool, and my father saw me off. The passengers were few-nine or ten. We had a cabin each. There was a Wesleyan medical missionary named Hardey going out to Hankow. We soon drew together. The doctor of the ship was a young fellow from Greenock, and had been at Glasgow College when I was there last. Among the 1200 we had not stumbled upon each other. The married man was something or other in the Consular service. A young lady passenger was the daughter of a judge in China. A young man was going out to try his fortune in China: his qualifications were some knowledge

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of tea and a love of drink. Another decent young fellow was going out to China as a tea-taster. Another young fellow was going out to Australia *via* Singapore. Thus, you see, I was the only parson on board; and as the ship's company was High Church, and I a Dissenter, it may be seen that we did not fit each other exactly. Some of the passengers were so High Church that one of them told me he thought we Dissenters were sunk more deeply in error than the Papists.

"The captain was a sensible kind of rough seaman, and I at once volunteered my services as chaplain, and was accepted, though with some caution. He evidently thought me too young to be trusted with a sermon; the Church of England prayers I might read, and he put into my hands a book with a sermon for any Sunday and holyday in the year. I took the book and said I would look through it. The Bay of Biscay was calm when we crossed it, but on Sunday morning we were tumbling about off the Rock of Lisbon. As I could hardly keep my legs, I did not think we should have had service; but we crowded into the smoking-saloon (we were afraid to venture below, for sickness), and I read prayers.

Next Sunday I read a sermon from the book. All the Sundays after that I gave them my own, and, as I was under the impression that they had not heard much plain preaching, did my best to let them hear the gospel pure and simple. I have suspected they did not quite like it. It was hinted to me that they complained of my preaching. The next Sunday came, and, under the impression it might be the last time I would have the opportunity, I made the most earnest and direct appeal to them I possibly could. I was not a little thankful and astonished when, soon after, in place of being asked to shut up, I was thanked for it, and assured it was the best I had given them, and told that it was a waste of, etc., etc., for me to go out as a missionary—

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I should have stopped at home. After that I had no trouble with the passengers, and we got on well together.

"As for the men, from captain to cabin-boy there were about sixty. Among these was one earnest Christian man, a German and a Baptist. He was a quartermaster. He was a little peculiar in appearance, and spoke English not quite smoothly. On one occasion, when some of the passengers were laughing at something he had done and said, the captain happened to pass, and, seeing what was up, remarked that the man was a first-rate fellow-he never caught him idle. If you except this man, the captain, and the boy, the whole ship's company swore like troopers. So universal was the vice that the men, I almost think, were hardly aware that they did swear. I was puzzled. Sometimes when I went out in the morning I would hear a volley of oaths coming from the mouth of a man who had been talking quite seriously with me over-night.

"Few of the men came to the service, and as they would not come to us we went to them. Hardey and I, usually in the evenings, conducted short little services in the forecastle as often as we thought desirable. We were always well received and listened to respectfully. I think I may say safely that all on board had repeated opportunities of hearing the gospel as plainly as I could put it, and a good many had something more than mere opportunities. After it was dark I used to go out and get the men one by one, as they sat in corners during their watch in the night. All they had to do was to be within call when wanted, and many a good long talk I have had with a good many of them. Of course, my object in accosting them was religious conversation, and this I usually succeeded in having; but on many occasions, that we might be quite on a footing

of equality, I had in return to listen to their yarns. The man on the look out was a frequent victim.

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I was always sure to find a man there, generally alone, and never asleep. The man, also, was changed at regular intervals, so that I knew exactly when I would find a fresh man. When I talked to the look-out man, I used to keep a sharp look-out myself, lest by distracting his attention I should get him into trouble. Many a good hour have I stood at the prow as we passed through the warm Indian Ocean, till my clothes were wet with the dew of night; and then I would find my way down to my cabin about midnight, with my head so full of the ghost-stories I had just heard that I was really afraid I might meet a real ghost coming out of my cabin."

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CHAPTER II

BEGINNING WORK

In 1817 two missionaries, the Rev. E. Stallybrass and the Rev. W. Swan, left England to begin Christian work among the Buriats, a Mongolian tribe living under Russian authority. At Selenginsk and at Onagen Dome they laboured for many years; but in 1841 the Russian Emperor ordered them to leave the country. From the command of the autocrat there was no appeal, and the mission came to an end. But in the good providence of God the two missionaries had translated the whole Bible into Buriat; the Old Testament being printed in Siberia in 1840, the New Testament in London in 1846. Notwithstanding the suppression of the mission, the Word of God in the Mongol tongue continued to circulate among the people.

It was to the reopening and development of this missionary work among the Mongol tribes that James Gilmour consecrated his life. He was appointed, in the first instance, to the London Mission at Peking, and that centre formed his first base of operations. He continued also a member of that mission until the close of his life. He reached the Chinese capital on May 18, 1870. At once he settled down to hard and continuous work at the Chinese

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language, endeavouring also from the first to discover the best means of restarting the Mongol Mission. The very full diary which he kept lies before us as we write, and enables us to understand the varying progress and hindrance, encouragement, and despondency of this time.

> "*June* 11, 1870.—Mr Gulick advises me to pay little attention to the Chinese and go in hot and strong for the Mongolian. I am not quite sure that he is not right, after all. However, I mean to stick into the Chinese yet for a time to come with my teacher and to mix among the people as much as I can. I went out tonight and with the gatekeeper and two of his companions had a lot of talk, in which I learned a good lot. I hope to benefit largely by this pleasant mode of study. Perhaps by this means I may be able to do them good. Lord grant it!"

> "*June* 12, 1870.—I am today twenty-seven years of age, and what have I done? Let the time that is past suffice to have wrought the will of the flesh. The prospect I have before me now is the most inspiriting one any man can have. Health, strength, as much conscious ability as makes one hope to be able to get the language of the people to whom I am sent, a new field of work among men who are decidedly religious and simple-minded, left pretty much to my own ideas as to what is best to be done in the attempted evangelisation of Mongolia, friends left in Britain behind me praying for me, comfort and peace here in the prosecution of my present studies, the idea that what I do is for eternity, and that this life is but the short prelude to an eternal state, the thought that after death there shall break on my view a thousand truths that now I long in vain to know—these thoughts and many others make my present life happy, and in a manner careless as to what should come. In time may I be able to do my part as I ought, and may God have great mercy upon me! "

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On June 22, 1870, the news of the Tientsin massacre reached Peking. A Roman Catholic convent had been destroyed and thirteen French people killed. Very great uncertainty prevailed as to whether this indicated a further purpose of attacking all missions and all foreigners, and for a while things looked very dark. It was a time in which the nerve and courage and faith of men were severely tried, and splendidly did Gilmour endure the test. While unable to escape wholly from the fears common to all, his reply to the counsels of worldly prudence and selfish dread was advance in his work. When others were wondering whether they might not have to retreat, he, alone, in almost total ignorance of the language, entirely unfamiliar with the country, went up to the great

Mongolian plain, and entered upon the service so close to his heart-personal intercourse with, and effort for, the Mongols.

How trying a season this was his diary reveals. Under date of June 23, 1870, the day after the first tidings of the outbreak had been received, he writes:

> "The Roman Catholic missionaries have suffered severely, and the Protestant missionaries are not in a very safe condition. We are living on the slope of a volcano that may put forth its slumbering rage at any moment. For example, people ask why there is no rain, and blame the foreigners for it; and should a famine ensue, we may fare hard for it. Now is the time for trying what stuff a man's religion is made of. We may be all dead men directly; are we afraid to die? Our death might further the cause of Christ more than our life could do. We must die some time or other; now that we have a near view of its possibility, how can we look forward to it? God! do

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> Thou make my faith firm and bright, so that death may seem small and not to be feared. Help me to trust Thee and Christ implicitly, so that with calm mind I may work while Thou dost let me live, and when Thou dost call me home, let me come gladly."

The further entries in his Diary at this time depict his inner experience from day to day:

> "*July* 10.—Rose 6.20. Dull morning, rained a little. Felt uncomfortable at the idea of being killed; felt troubled at the idea of leaving Peking. How am I to pack and carry my goods? Felt troubled at remaining in the midst of a troubled city, with a government weak and stupid. How is my mission to get on beginning thus? O God, let me cast all my care upon Thee, and commit my soul also to Thy safe keeping. Keep me, O God, in perfect peace! Rain made a thin meeting this morning, but all was quiet. In afternoon went with Mr Edkins to the west; things uncommonly quiet and peaceful.
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> "*July* 12.—While others are writing to papers and trying to stir up the feelings of the people, so that they may take action in the matter, perhaps I may be able to do some good moving Heaven. My creed leads me to think that prayer is efficacious, and surely a day's asking God to overrule all these events for good is not lost. Still~ there is a great feeling that when a man is praying he is doing nothing, and this feeling, I am sure, makes us give undue importance to work, sometimes even to the hurrying over or even to the neglect of prayer.
>
> "*July* 22.—A good deal troubled about the present state of matters. I don't exactly know how to estimate rumours and reports, and this may cause me more uneasiness than there is any need for. Still, I don't know. At times I feel a great revulsion from being killed, at other

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times I feel as if I could be killed quietly, and not dislike the thing much. Sometimes the tone of those about us is hopeful, and that causes hope also. Sometimes the prospect of a speedy removal, a half flight, comes upon me with great force, and to see all its annoyance, not to speak of the danger, is not pleasant at all. Oh for the simple, childlike faith that can trust all things to God and leave all care upon Him! Ought we not to have it? Is God not the same God now that He was when He delivered His people from Egypt, and His saints from the hands of their enemies, from the mouth of the lions, and the fiery furnace? Cannot God keep us yet—will He not do it? But then comes the thought, perhaps God does not wish us to live, but to die. Often has He allowed His saints to be slain. What then? Well, as the men in the furnace said of God, 'Will He care to defend us? if not, be it known unto you we will not yield.' I might have died in childhood, in youth, before conversion, and if then, alas! alas! I can remember the time when the pains of hell got such a terrible hold upon me that I would have gladly changed places in the world with any one who had the hope of salvation. Death, life, prospects, honour, shame, seemed nothing compared with this hope of salvation, which I was then without. 'Could I ever be saved?' was the question; 'would I ever have the hope that I knew others had?' Had I died in darkness—God be thanked, the light has shined forth, and I have the hope of eternal life. May God make me more Christ-like, and give me stronger hope! Well, then, this hope I have; from this fearful pit I have been delivered; in the light I now walk. God I call my Father, Christ my Saviour, heaven my home, earth and the life here the entrance to real life. If there is anything in our faith or in our belief, then heaven,is as much better than earth as it is higher than earth, and our soul's life is insured from all harm.

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If a man is insured against all possible harm, why should he be afraid? Not one hair of our head shall perish! o Lord, help me to live this faith and to be in this frame of mind. In this city are many foreigners, who came here to learn the language, etc., and many of them have no great hope of heaven. They seem calm enough, and are no doubt calm enough; shall the courage of the world, shall the courage of scepticism, shall the courage, of carelessness be greater and produce better fruit than the courage of the Christian? O Lord, preserve me from the sin of dishonouring Thy name through fear and cowardice! Let us be bold in the Lord! "

By the end of July 1870, Gilmour had reached a fixed resolution to go to Mongolia as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made. A severe test had been applied to him, and the way n which he met it gives the key to the whole of his after-life. He used the trial as a help onwards in the path of duty, and the chain of events which would have

led many men to postpone indefinitely the beginning of a new and hard work only drove him the more eagerly into new fields. The reasons that influenced him are set forth in his official report written many months later.

"After the massacre at Tientsin, very grave fears prevailed at Peking; no one could tell how far the ramifications of the plot might extend, and it was impossible to sift the matter. The people openly talked of an extermination, and claimed to have the tacit favour of the Government in this;. nay more, the Government itself issued ambiguous, if not insinuating, proclamations, which fomented the excitement of the populace to such an extent that the days were fixed for the 'Clearing of

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Peking.' The mob was thoroughly quieted on the first of the days fixed by a twenty hours' pour of tremendous rain, which converted Peking into a muddy, boatless Venice, and kept the people safely at home in their helpless felt shoes, as securely as if their feet had been put into the stocks. This was Friday. Tuesday was the reserve day; Saturday and Sabbath one felt the tide of excitement rising, and on Monday morning the *Peking Gazette* came out with an Imperial edict that at once allayed the excitement, and assured us that there was no danger for the present.

"We had then to draw breath and look about us calmly, and the general conclusion that the 'Old Pekingers ' came to was that the French would be compelled to resort to force of arms to gain redress. The attitude of the Chinese people and Government made them think so, and so they determined to wait on quietly in Peking till things should get thick, and then it would be time to go south. I think I may safely say that everyone drew out an inventory of his things, and not a few had their most necessary things packed 'on the sly,' and were ready to start on short notice.

"Up to this point I stood quietly aside; but now was my time to reason, and on the data they supplied I reasoned thus: 'If I go south, no Mongol can be prevailed on to go with me, and so I am shut out from my work, and that for an indefinite time. If I can get away north, then I can go on with the language, and perhaps come down after the smoke clears away, knowing Mongolian, and having lost no time.' I felt a great aversion to travelling so far alone, and with such imperfect knowledge of the language, but as I thought it over from day to day I was more and more convinced that to run the risk of having to go south would be to prove unfaithful to duty, and so I conferred no longer with likings or dislikings,

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resolved to go should an opportunity offer, and in the meantime worked away at Chinese.

"By and by a Russian merchant turned Up; he was going to Kiachta (now spelt Kiakhta or Kyakhta), so I started with him. I could not go sooner, as it was not safe to travel in the country before the Imperial edict was issued; to wait longer was to run the risk of not going at all."

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CHAPTER III

MONGOLIAN APPRENTICESHIP

MONGOLIA is a geographical term of rather vague import. It denotes a vast territory between China proper and Siberia, stretching from the Sea of Japan on the east to Turkestan on the west, a distance of nearly 3000 miles; and from the southern boundary of Siberia to the Great Wall of China, a distance of about 900 miles. It consists of high tablelands, lifted up considerably above the level of Northern China, and is approached only through rugged mountain passes. The central portion of this enormous area is called the Desert of Gobi.

A kind of highway for much of the trade between China and Russia runs through the eastern central part of Mongolia, leaving China at the frontier town of Kalgan, and touching Siberia at the frontier town of Kiachta. Along this route during all but the winter months, caravans of camel-carts and ox-carts attended by companies of Mongols and Chinese are constantly passing. The staple export from China is tea; the chief imports are salt, soda, hides, and timber.

The west and the centre of Mongolia is occupied by nomad Mongols. They have clusters of huts and tents in fixed locations which form their winter dwellings. But in

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summer they journey over the great plains in search of the best pasturage for their flocks and herds. They are consequently exceedingly difficult to reach by any other method than that of sharing their roving tent life. In the south-eastern district of Mongolia there are large numbers of agricultural Mongols who speak both Chinese and Mongolian. The towns in this part are almost wholly inhabited by Chinese.

The winter in Mongolia is both long and severe; in the summer the heat is often very oppressive, and the great Plain is subject to severe storms of dust, rain, and wind.

Buddhism is all-powerful, and the larger half of the male population are lamas or Buddhist priests. "Meet a Mongol on the road, and the probability is that he is saying his prayers and counting his beads as he rides along. Ask him where he is going, and on what errand, as the custom is, and likely he will tell you he is going to some shrine to worship. Follow him to the temple, and there you will find him one of a company with dust-marked forehead, moving lips, and the never absent beads, going the rounds of the sacred place, prostrating himself at every shrine, bowing before every idol, and striking pious attitudes at every new object of reverence that meets his eye. Go to Mongolia itself, and probably one of the first great sights that meet your eye will be a temple of imposing grandeur, resplendent from afar in colours and gold."

"The Mongol's religion marks out for him certain seemingly indifferent actions as good or bad, meritorious or sinful. There is scarcely one single step in life, however

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insignificant, which he can take without first consulting his religion through his priest. Not only does his religion insist on moulding his soul, and colouring his whole spiritual existence, but it determines for him the colour and cut of his coat. It would be difficult to find another instance in which any religion has grasped a country so universally and completely as Buddhism has Mongolia."[1]

It was to the herculean task of attempting single-handed to evangelise a region and a people like this that James Gilmour addressed himself. His early journeys are fully set forth in *Among the Mongols,* and we do not propose to repeat them here. Our object rather is to depict, so far as possible, the inner life of James Gilmour, and the real nature of the work he accomplished. He left Peking on August 5, and reached Kalgan four days later. On August 27 he started for his first trip across the great plain of Mongolia to Kiachta. A Russian postmaster was to be his companion, but, to avoid travelling on Sunday, Gilmour started a day ahead, and then waited for the Russian to come up. Here is his first view of scenes he was so often in later life to visit.

> "*Sabbath, August* 28.—Awoke about 5 a.m. just as it was drawing towards light, and saw that we were right out into the Plain.
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> "I am writing up my diary, with a lot of people looking into my cart. I have just given them a Mongol Catechism, and I hope it may do them good. God, do Thou bless it to them! Would I could speak to them, but I cannot. I am glad to be saved the trouble of travelling Today. My mind feels at rest

for the present. I am looking about me; and having my first look at the life I

1 *Among the Mongols,* p. 211.

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am likely to lead. There are several more Mongol dwellings within sight, plenty of camels, horses, and oxen. The Mongols have a tent of their own, and the 'commandant's' tent has also been put up. A Mongol has just come up and changed his dress, his cloak serving him as a tent meantime. I am hesitating whether to try to read in my cart or go off a little way with my plaid and umbrella.

"Had not a very intellectual or spiritual day after all. Went in the afternoon away to the east. Had a good view and a time of devotion at a cairn from which an eagle rose as I approached. Returned to the camp and bought milk and some cheese. Intended to make porridge, but the fire was not good on account of the blowing, so I drank off my milk, ate some bread, and went to sleep."

The journey across the desert, including a visit to Urga, occupied a month. It was full of intense interest for the traveller, and many of the most abiding impressions of his life and work were then received. His diary reveals the deep yearnings of his heart for the salvation, of the Mongols. Under the date September 11, 1870, he writes:

"Astir by daybreak. Camels watering; made porridge and tea. This is the Lord's day; help me, O Lord, to be in the spirit, and to be glad and rejoice in the day which Thou hast made! Several huts in sight. When shall I be able to speak to the people? O Lord, suggest by the Spirit how I should come among them, and guide me in gaining the language, and in preparing myself to teach the life and love of Christ Jesus! Oh, let me live for Christ, and feel day by day the blessedness of a will given up to God, and the happiness of a life which has its every circumstance working for my good!"

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His constant rule was to rest from all journeyings, so far as possible, on the Sabbath. After another week's experience, on September 18 he thus records his impressions:

"Encamped just over the plain we saw at sunset last night. We are some distance from the real exit, but not far. This is the Lord's day; God help me to be in the spirit notwithstanding all distractions. Oh that God would give me more of His Spirit, more of His felt Presence, more of the spirit and power of prayer, that I may bring down blessings on this poor people of Mongolia! As I look at them and their huts I ask again and again how am I to go among them; in comfort and in a waggon, with all my things about me; or in poverty, reducing myself to their level? If I go among them rich,

they will be continually begging, and perhaps regard me more as a source of gifts than anything else. If I go with nothing but the Gospel, there will be nothing to distract their attention from the unspeakable gift.

"8.15 a.m.–3.15 p.m. Good long walk. Met camels and came upon a cart encampment, estimated at one hundred and seventy. Know where I am on the map. There is a camel encampment where we are. Two huts from which comes fuel. Read today in 2 Chronicles xvi. God never failed those who trusted in Him and appealed to Him. God was displeased with the King of Judah, because, after the deliverance from the Lubims, Ethiopians, etc., he trusted to the arm of flesh to deliver him from the Syrians. Do we not in our day rest too much on the arm of flesh? Cannot the same wonders be done now as of old? Do not the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, still to show Himself strong on behalf of those who put their trust in Him? Oh that God would give me more practical faith in Him! Where

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is now the Lord God of Elijah? He is waiting for Elijah to call on Him. God give me some of Elijah's spirit, and let my power be of God, and my hope from Him for the conversion of this people.

"It is nothing to the Lord to save by many or by them that have no power. Help me, O God, for I rest on Thee, and in Thy name I go against this multitude!"

Kiachta, on the southern frontier of Siberia, was reached on September 28, 1870, and there Gilmour was at once plunged into a series of troubles. The Russian and Chinese authorities would not recognise his passport, and he had to wait months before another could be obtained from Peking. He found absolutely no sympathy in his work. He knew next to nothing of the Mongol language. Yet with robust faith, with wholehearted courage, with a resolution that nothing could daunt, he set to work. A Scotch trader, named Grant, was kind to him, and found accommodation for him at his house. At first he tried the orthodox plan of getting a Mongol teacher to visit and instruct him. Before he secured one he used to visit such Mongols as he found in the neighbourhood, trying to acquire a vocabulary from them, asking the names of the articles they were using, their actions, and all such other matters as he could make them understand. But his loneliness, his ignorance of the language, the inaction to which he was condemned, partly by his difficulty in getting a suitable teacher, and partly by the uncertainty as to whether the authorities would allow him to remain, told upon his eager spirit as week after week passed by, and he became subject to fits of severe depression. Here is a picture of one of these early

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days. He had been trying to talk with a Buriat carpenter, in a place called Kudara, not far from Kiachta:

"After getting my quota of words I walked through the town. The main object in it is the church, a large whitewashed structure built by Mr Grant's father-in-law when he was a rich man. He was made poor, comparatively speaking, in one night by a great fire which burnt up all before it. In addition to the church are some streets of Cossack houses, desolate enough looking, the streets desolate enough at best, but rendered much more so this morning by the snow melting in the sun, which is still high, and manages to thaw away. all the snow that falls in places where it shines, though it was frost all day in the shade. Passing the town I made for the river, which rolled on quiet and cold. Passed through large orchards of apple (?) trees; doubled about, went to the extreme west, got on a hill, and came round home again in time for dinner at 4 p.m. I felt very lonely, and not having a teacher I am thrown idle, as it were, a great part of the day after I get my words. It is true I am taking notice of all I see, but it always occurs to me that this is not furthering the Mongolian Mission in any direct way. I often think of what Dr Alexander said in his charge at my ordination: '*You do not go to discover new countries*.' Would I had a teacher, that the language might go on full swing! Today I felt a good deal like Elijah in the wilderness, when the reaction came on after his slaughter of the priests of Baal. He prayed that he might die. I wonder if I am telling the truth when I say that I felt drawn towards suicide. I take this opportunity of declaring strongly that on all occasions two missionaries should go together. I was not of this opinion a few weeks ago, but I had no idea how weak an individual I am. My eyes have filled with tears frequently these last few days in

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spite of myself, and I do not wonder in the least that Grant's brother shot himself. *Oh! the intense loneliness of Christ's life,* not a single one understood Him! He bore it. O Jesus, let me follow in Thy steps, and have in me the same Spirit that Thou hadst!

"Read papers in the evening (Oct. 5). So Jones of Singrauli is dead! I heard him in Exeter Hall, May, a year or two ago, and heard a good deal of him through Dr Evans, of Cheshunt College. I am persuaded he was a missionary among a thousand. When he returned to his station he found that during his absence matters had got out of order a good deal, and he set about putting them right. Now he is dead! How prodigal God seems of His workers—Hartley, Jones, both AI, both gone. God's ways are not ours. We would have preserved these two at all risk and expense, but God *takes* them away, and it seems to us as if He were hurting His own cause. God knows best, but to *us* it is a great mystery."

Two days later he received a letter telling him of the death of a brilliant young Glasgow student, and he enters in his diary comments which received only too complete an illustration in his own subsequent career:

> "Another splendid student going from college to the grave. This is a thing of common occurrence with reference to Glasgow College, and, in am not mistaken, I have seen it somewhere publicly commented on. Men, poor it may be, strive through college with a mind and determination beyond their circumstances and bodily strength, fight a great battle with poverty and more clever students, resolute to take the first place if possible, and just as the college is finished with them, and sending them forth to the field of life decorated with all the honours it can bestow, the fond Alma Mater has to keep on mourning and drop her tear over an early grave.

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> "Are the young men to blame? Who can be restrained by the cold-blooded calculation of preserving health? 'There is my opponent, I'll thrash him if I can; better to toil out my life-blood drop by drop than let it mount to my cheek as a mantle of shame when I find myself defeated when I might have been victorious.' Then they conscientiously work themselves to death. If they did not work as hard as they do, and refrain from recreation as they do, they would have in their breasts the uneasy feeling that they have not done as much as they might have done; and what noble nature can be content to live under that accusation written against them by the supreme court in their own breasts?
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> "Several times I have resolved to refrain for health's sake, but in a short time found such an uneasy feeling about not doing as much as I might, that I had to give it up and go at it. I *never* feel that I have done as much as I might, and when I am doing most I feel best."

Very dissatisfied with his progress, and stung one day by a remark of Grant's to the effect that he did not seem to speak Mongolian readily, Gilmour changed his plans. He resolved to go out upon the Plain, and persuade some Mongol to allow him to share his tent. On December 13, 1870, he left Kiachta and journeyed out into Mongolia to the first cluster of tents, named Olau Bourgass. There he If ound a friendly Mongol. "Grant's contractor. Found him at his prayers. He motioned me to sit down, and when his devotions were finished he gave me a warm welcome. He lives alone in his tent, having nothing to care for but the horses for the courier service, and a couple of lamas[1] to attend to his wants, one of whom goes with

1 A lama is a priest of the lama section of Buddhists. More than half the population of Mongolia are lamas.

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the letters when they come. We talked, and I learned a great deal, when at last I broke my mind to him, and was glad to find that he received it favourably. I settled to remain there during the night. Nothing very remarkable happened except that we were invaded by a great blustering lama, intoxicated. He came ramping into the tent as if he would have knocked everything down. After a time he went away and lodged in the next hut. I went to bed about ten and slept well, though my feet were cold towards morning."

The next three months were passed mainly in this tent. Gilmour used, whenever possible, to return to Kiachta to spend the Sunday at Grant's house; but by enduring the hardships, and suffering all the inconveniences of ordinary Mongol life, he rapidly acquired the colloquial, and he also made an indelible impression upon the minds and hearts of the natives, who ever afterwards spoke of him as "Our Gilmour." He saw Mongol life as it was, free from all the illusion and romance sometimes thrown around it. He became intimately acquainted with the various Mongol types, and he began to enter into the native habits of thought. His diary contains many a scene like the following:

> "I gave the lama a book on Saturday, and when I came back on Tuesday I found he had read it through twice. He set upon me with questions, getting me to admit premises, and then reasoned from them. Christ being at the right hand of God was a great point with him. If God has no form, how can anyone be at His right hand? Then, again, if God is everywhere, Christ is everywhere right and left of God, and how can that be?

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> "The omnipresence was a staggerer. Was God in that pot, in the tent, in his boot? Did he tread upon God? Then was God inside the kettle? Did the hot tea not scald Him? Again, if God was inside the kettle, the kettle was living! And so he held it up to the laughing circle as a new species of animal. I asked him if a fly, were inside the kettle, would the kettle be alive? 'No,' he said; 'but a fly does not fill the space as God must do.' 'Well, then,' said I, 'is my coat alive because I fill it?' This settled the question."

In March 1871 he visited Selenginsk and Onagen Dome, the scene of the labours of Stallybrass and Swan from 1817 to 1841, and then he took a run into Siberia, crossing Lake Baikal and visiting Irkutsk. At the latter place he reviews the past few months:

> "Another week has passed over my head with many hopes and fears. This day, a week ago, I was nearing Ana in doubt as to many things; now I am in Irkutsk, having my path marked with mercies. In many points of my

journey I expected difficulties which might have stopped me short in my path, but all these have disappeared, and I am here, having succeeded beyond expectations. One thing is not right: my readiness to forget the ways in which God has helped me. Sometimes for weeks and months I look forward to some crisis which is coming; it comes off well, and in two days I am as if I had forgotten that to which I had looked forward with so much apprehension. In this manner I am not only guilty of ingratitude, but lose much joy and strength of faith and hope. What should make me more happy than the thought of the helps and deliverances that God has vouchsafed me; and in troubles present and to come, what can give me more faith and courage than to

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remember that out of such troubles I was delivered before?

"One thing I sometimes think of I left Britain with no intention of travelling; I expected to settle down quietly and confine myself to a circle I could impress. This plan has been completely changed and overruled. Two months have I been in Peking; two weeks have I been in Kalgan; a month have I been in the desert; a month have I been in Kudara, a small Russian frontier military post; a month and a half have I been in Kiachta; two months have I been in Mongolia; and now two weeks have I been travelling in Russia. A year and a month have elapsed since I left home, and during that time I have been walking to and fro on the face of the earth, and going up and down in it. In this way I have not found my life at all dull, but very stirring. Indeed, many people would have left home to travel as I have done. I sought it not; it came, and I took it. So as yet I have no hardships to complain of. To see the places and things I have seen—Liverpool, Wales, Rock of Lisbon, Gibraltar, Malta, Egypt, Port Said, Canal, Suez, Red Sea, Cape Gardafui, Indian Ocean, Penang, Straits of Malacca, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tientsin, Peking, Kalgan, Desert, Urga, Kiachta, Russia, Baikal, Irkutsk-only even to see these, men will make long journeys. I have seen them all without seeking them, with the exception of Baikal and Irkutsk. These are all by the way, and I dwell upon them as proofs that God, in sending His servants from home and kindred, often gives them pleasure and worldly enjoyment on the way, which He does not promise, and which they have no right to expect."

After another but briefer sojourn at Olau Bourgass he set out on his return journey, visited Urga, then crossed

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the great plain on horseback in the course of fourteen' days, and reached Kalgan on June 11. After a rest there he made two excursions into Mongolia, visiting Lama Miao, one of the great Mongol religious centres, in the first; and occupying some weeks with a further spell of Mongol tent life during the second.

His diary, under date of September 22, 1871, while he was resting at Kalgan, thus sums up his experiences:

> "I desire Today to look back on the way by which the Lord has led me for the last year. In September 1870 I was looking out eagerly, anxiously, for some one who was going to Russia, that I might go with him. I could find no one, I made it a subject of prayer, and at last, when I was on my knees, in came McCoy to tell me of a Russian who was going up without delay, I saw the Russian, and arranged to go, and started. 'While they are speaking I will answer them.'
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> "On the journey between Peking and Kalgan I was alone, I may say, and could speak little Chinese, yet I got on very well; and though my money was in a box on the back of a donkey, yet it came in all safe, none lost. In Kalgan I had difficulty at first about finding camels, but at length the Russian postmaster turned out to be going home. The time when was uncertain, quite; his departure depended on the coming of his successor. I prayed about this, and one day was informed that the successor had arrived much sooner than was expected, and that we were to start in a day or two. We did start, and after a prosperous journey arrived safely at Kiachta.
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> "There I found Grant and Hegemann, two Englishmen. I went to live in Grant's country house at Kudara. A difficulty arose about a teacher. I prayed about this, and strolling along came upon a tent in which was a man

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> who was out of employment, and, he being educated, I engaged him to be my teacher, In Kiachta, after some delay, I got a teacher, but not to my satisfaction. After I had been with him a time Grant remarked one day that I did not seem to be making much progress in the language. This stung me to the quick, and made me go down into Mongolia. Here I was directed to the tent of Grant's contractor, and with him I made arrangements to live. I thank God for not permitting me to get a good teacher in Kiachta. Had I got a good teacher there, I would simply have remained there, and I am sure would not have learned half as much of the language as I did in the tent at Mongolia, would have got none of the insight I gained into the style of Mongolian life, and would not have got the introduction I had there to numerous Mongols. At the time I was immensely chagrined that I could not get a proper teacher, but now, after the lapse of only a few months, I can see good reason for thanking God for leading me by that way. This

should teach me to trust God more than I do when things seem to thwart my purpose.

"Again, I was under a great disappointment about the delay that occurred in the sending of my passport from Peking. In consequence of its not coming I was unable to go to Urga with Lobsung and Sherrub in February, I felt it much at the time, but some months after (in June) I learned that these men with whom I wanted to go suffered excessively on the road; so much so that, had I gone with them, I might have got my feet frozen and died with the cold. Here again I have to praise God for not giving me my own way.

'Thy way, not mine, O Lord;
However dark it be.'

"Then, again, I had long desired to visit the scene of the former Siberian Mission, and through the mercy of

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Providence I was permitted to do this, My journey back through the desert also was marked by mercies. Truly I may stand and say,

'When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.'"

After his wanderings even Kalgan was a haven of rest, and he had secured there a base of operations. "Now," he writes, "that I have got my study window pasted up, and a nice little stove set going, it seems so comfortable that it would be snug to stay where I am. But comfort is not the missionary's rule. My object in going into Mongolia at this time is to have an opportunity of reviewing and extending my knowledge of the colloquial, which has become a little rusty consequent upon its disuse to a great extent while here, trying to get up the written."

All who are even superficially acquainted with Chinese matters know how difficult it is to acquire the colloquial, and still more the written language. Mongolian is not nearly so difficult, but it presents a task needing vigour of intellect and strength of will. Both of these Gilmour possessed in a measure far above the average.

"In the written," he states on October 7, 1871, "I am still far from at home. Most of the Bible I can read slowly and at sight. Many words I can write. I think I could write a bad letter myself alone. The other day I did so. My teacher said it was well written, and said also he rejoiced in the progress of his scholar; but I put this down to mere politeness."

During this visit he stayed in the tent of a Mongol named Mahabul, who lived there with his wife and an

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only son, a lama. They were all much addicted to the use of whisky.

"*October* 14, '71.—Today rose before the sun, read words, wrote at the account of my journey from Urga, went to the mountain for devotion, revisited the silver worker, who is making the bride's ornaments, dined, visited the Norying's lama son, who fell from a horse and broke his leg, had tea, and went to visit tents a mile or two to the south. There found, as master of the tent, a blackman (a layman) I had seen before, and as visitor a lama I had left in Mahabul's tent when I went out. From one thing to another we got to speak of God and His book. At last they asked me to read them a portion. I read in English a few verses, and then gave them the parable of the Prodigal Son in Mongol colloquial. I also gave them a specimen of a sermon, and explained shortly the nature of God, when they all seemed pleased. The lama finished up the thing by saying, 'Your outward appearance differs from us, but inwardly you agree with us.' Coming home I felt amply repaid for all the uncomfort and solitude, and leading a Mongol life, by the comparative ease with which I can converse with them, and the manner in which they wonder at my proficiency in the colloquial."

In his official report he rapidly summarises the achievements of the last nine months:

"By the middle of February I had a limited knowledge of the colloquial, picked up from listening to and joining in the conversation going on among the inmates of the tent at Olau Bourgass, and those with the numerous visitors who took occasion to call on my lama, who was rather a famous man. At the end of February the lama returned south to Urga, and I went back into Russia, and

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got a Buriat teacher. This individual, however, turned out so incredibly lazy, and I felt so dull alone in my large comfortable rooms, after the friendly bustle and crowd of the little tent, with its cheery fire, that I could not stand it. So I got my teacher and myself into a tarantass, and went off to visit the scenes of the former mission in Siberia. My teacher proved very useful. He spoke Russian very well, I spoke Mongolian to him, and thus we travelled, the doubtful wonder of all Russians, who could not understand how a man not born a Buriat could get acquainted with that language, and yet know no Russian. After visiting the converts, partly for the sake of diverting the curious eyes of the Russians from the great aim of my journey and partly in the traveller's spirit, I turned westward and crossed the Baikal on the ice, and remained a few days in

the capital of Siberia, Irkutsk. On returning to Kiachta I found another teacher, and went out for another month into Mongolia and tent life. All the while that I was in Mongolia I used to return to Kiachta once a week, usually on Saturday, and abide in the land of habitations till Monday.

"Early in May I started for the south. I had intended to remain over the summer in Urga, but unexpected difficulties turned up, and led me to decide on going down to Kalgan at once. From Urga to Kalgan (600 miles) was done on horseback, accompanied by a single Mongol; and as we carried no luggage, we had to depend on the hospitality of the Mongols for lodging and cooking, or, as they call the latter, 'pot and ladle.'

"In this way I saw a very great deal of tent life during the twelve or thirteen days the ride lasted. I got into Kalgan just two days before the rainy season came on (June 15), and having, after difficulty, secured a teacher, passed the summer in Kalgan studying the book language and practising writing. In October I went up

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again to the grassland and spent some weeks revising my knowledge of the colloquial and observing the difference between the northern and southern manner of speaking. I finally left Mongolia in a furious storm on the morning of November I, and re-entered Peking November 9."

Gilmour on his return was naturally an object of great interest to all the missionary and to some of the official community. He soon settled down to the study of Chinese, and to such mission work as he could usefully engage in during the winter at Peking. A letter to the writer, under date of January 21, 1872, enables us to realise somewhat the life of this period:

"MY DEAR LOVETT,—Though I acknowledged receipt of your last welcome epistle, I am aware I owe you a return, and here it is … I have thought that perhaps an account of how a Sabbath goes in Peking might not be uninteresting, and I'll just confine myself to Today. Well, this morning, on getting up, I found my stove was out. This is a very unusual thing, but it just happens once, say, in three weeks. The thermometer was about 5°. The first thing after getting dressed was not to call my servant, as you might suppose, but to go in quest of letters. A mail had come in the night before, but I had returned home too late last night to see it. So I went over to Dr Dudgeon's house before he was up, prowled about till t found the mail, but there was nothing for me. I returned to my cold room, and was there till the breakfast-bell rang. I board with Edkins, and to go there is a pleasant break in the monotony.

"On coming back to my quarters I found the room full of smoke, doors and windows open, my boy on his knees fussing about the stove, and saying, *Moo too poo shing*—'the wood won't do.' I saw at once that that

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would not do for me, so I buttoned up my coat and went out on to the great street for a walk. The street on which we live, the Ha Ta Mun (great street), runs north and south, and a cold wind was blowing down the road, carrying clouds of dust with it. Through the dust, however, were visible the paraphernalia of two funerals, one going north, the other going south. They met just opposite our place. That going south was much the grander of the two, and had a long procession of people carrying emblematical devices, honorific umbrellas, drums, gongs, and musical instruments. Ever and anon a man took quantities of paper discs with square holes cut in the centre and scattered them to the north wind. The papers are supposed to represent cash, and were scrambled. for eagerly by the urchins, though they could be valuable only as waste paper. In the procession also was carried the chair in which the deceased used to ride, his mule cart also figured conspicuous, and then came the mourners:

"As you know, mourning garb in China is *white,* and I noticed that some of the mourners had adopted a neat device. All Chinamen who can afford to be warm in winter wear robes lined inside with fur. A rich robe is lined with fine material, but the common thing is white lambskin. Well, these fellows simply become turncoats for the time, and put on their fur robes inside out, and thus were in the fashion. The coffin itself was laid in a magnificent bier towering high, surmounted by a gilt top piece, hung with silks, and borne by forty-eight bearers.

"Of course everything has to make way for the funeral. The Peking streets are very wide, and at the same time very narrow. In the centre and high up is a cart road with an up and a down line, along the sides of this are ditches and holes, beyond these ditches and holes is another way more or less passable, and beyond that again the shops. The funeral procession took the crown

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of the road, crept along at its snail's pace, while the traffic took to the side roads.

"After a good long walk among stalls and wheelbarrows I got back to my abode, found a good fire, and that it was high time to go to the Chinese service. I don't understand all I hear, but I understand some, and make a point of hearing one and sometimes two Chinese sermons on the Sabbath. An old Chinaman was preaching, and I could see from the manner of the congregation that he was securing the fixed attention of his hearers. Before the sermon was ended there was a bustle at the door, and in came three Mongols with my Chinese card. They were asked to wait till the service

was concluded, then I took them to my quarters and had some conversation with them. One of them had come for the doctor, and wished to get cured of so prosaic a disease as the itch.

"Before I was finished with them, my servant came to say that another Mongol had called for me and was waiting for me in Edkins's. When I went over I found an old Mongol, a blackman, fifty-eight years of age. This layman was named Amasa, and has been in the habit of paying Mr Edkins visits every winter when he comes down to Peking. Last year he did not come, and we were concluding that he had died. Of course we were glad to see him. I got him into my room and we had quite an afternoon of it. The old man knew a good deal about Christianity, and I gave him what additional instruction I could. Of all the Mongols I have seen he is, perhaps, the most ready to receive instruction.

"It was quite late in the afternoon before he left, and I had just time to take a walk at sunset and be back in time for dinner. Immediately after that the people began to assemble for evening service. This is held every Sabbath evening in Mr Edkins's parlour. Upwards of twenty usually compose the congregation. The missionaries take

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the service in turn: After service the mass of the congregation separated, but one man came with me to my room, and there we sat talking till midnight, when my visitor rose to depart.

"There, you see, I have given you the history of one Sabbath in Peking. It is a pretty fair sample of what goes on here very frequently. However, when I find myself free on the afternoon I accompany Mr Edkins to some one of the two chapels, which are in distant parts of the city. I do not go so much to hear him preach as to have his conversation on the way there and back, and, as you may suppose, we sometimes stumble upon an argument, and this makes it quite lively."

The self-denying and arduous labours of his first sojourn in Mongolia had given to James Gilmour a knowledge of the language and an acquaintance with the nomadic Mongols of the Plain far in excess of that possessed by any other European. But even then, as also at a later date, the question was raised whether more fruitful work might not be done among the agricultural Mongols inhabiting the country to the north-east of Peking. Hence, on April 16, 1872, he started on his first journey through the district in which in later years the closing labours of his life were to be accomplished. He spent thirty-seven days in this preliminary tour, and travelled about 1000 miles.

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CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN IN MONGOLIA

IN 1873 Gilmour resumed his visits to the Plain and on March 15 he was at Kalgan, writing, "No appearance of getting away to the north. I promenade daily the streets and accost Mongols, but with no success as to getting camels, or even a horse,to hire as far as Mahabul's. A day or two later Mahabul arrived in Kalgan on his way to Peking, and by his aid Gilmour secured two camels, and on March 24 he started north, reaching Mahabul's tent on the 28th. He at once endeavoured to secure the services of a Mongol named Lojing, and the usual series of delays and vexations occurred.

"Today (March 29) I got impatient and went for a walk. Came back, and Lojing came and said he would go. Felt relieved; he wants me to come back this way, and I consent, though I would rather not. He came back in the afternoon, saying that he could not get off his engagement to read prayers with some other lama for Gichik's soul,[1] so that we cannot start before Thursday at noon. Mahabul's wife gave him some whisky, and he went to the officers and got drunk. He waited for a camel

1 The son of a chief who had recently been killed by a fall from his horse.

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which was offered for sale. The camel came when I was out. He was drunk, did not watch it, so it drifted away before the storm. A boy on horseback was sent after it. When it came it was a perfect object, yet they asked twenty taels for it. He is to go after a camel tomorrow. He was so drunk that, remembering Gichik's fate, I am uneasy to think of his riding my tall camel. O Lord, give me patience!"

This and the three subsequent journeys over the Plain made in the course of 1873, were full of incident illustrative of the difficulties of the work, the peculiarities of the people, and the restless energy and indomitable perseverance of the missionary. But the limitations of space forbid us to linger; we extract a few notes from the diary. It was on the second of

these journeys, while at Lama Miao, that he witnessed the "Mirth of Hell," as he calls it, described in *Among the Mongols,* Chapter XI.

"*April* 19, 1873.—Today had more provocation from my Mongol, and my earnest prayer is that I may be able to stand it all, and not get soured in temper and feeling against the Mongols. I must have patience. Some knowledge of camel's flesh also would help me not a little. As it stands, I feel an incompetent 'duffer.'"

"*May* 6.—Travelled parallel to the road in a stupid manner over hill and dale, because Lojing chose to consider it a nearer way. The way was no nearer at all and much more steep. At last got to a lot of tents down in a hollow, called the 'Great Water' *(Ihha Osso).* Had quite a lot of people. One lama the most provoking child (25 years old) I think I ever met. He was a perfect nuisance; even the tone of his voice I could not abide. This individual came to my tent even after I was down in bed.

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I was glad he was done for once. Next morning he was in my tent before I was up, remarking, 'What a great sleeper you are!' Last night he had remarked, 'How early you go to bed!' I am afraid he is the most empty, poor fellow I have known."

"*May* 13.—Today also occurred another of my lama's conspicuous stupidities; after asking the road to a set of tents where dwelt friends of his own, he suddenly left the road and began the ascent of a steep hill. I asked where he was going. He said to the tents. I followed some distance, and then from the convergence of paths judged that there was no pass where he was going, and accordingly shouted to him to stop. Stop he did, and also looked thunder. I asked him, 'Have you travelled this way before?' 'No,' said he. 'Come this way, and follow the road.' 'You go that road,' said he, 'I go this road.', Nothing of the kind,' said I. 'You come here, and we'll get to tents.' He came; but then and there began one of his intolerable tirades against me, saying how disobedient I was, and that *this was his own native place,* he knew. What a bad man I was! He had hardly finished his fury when lo, behold, close before us, right in our path, the very tents we were looking for! He is, to use a Mongol idiom, 'Stupider than stupid.'"

"*Sept.* 12.—We are now in a diphtheria district. I go into it, and hope to remain some time, trusting myself to the hands of God. I am safe enough in His hands. If He can forward mission work more by my death than by my life, His will be done."

"*Sept.* 18.—Today let pass me, as all were starting from the temple, about six men and three women without telling them of Jesus."

At the close of the year Mr Gilmour sent home another elaborate report, a large portion of which appeared

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in the *Chronicle of the London Missionary Society* for December 1874. We extract here a few paragraphs not then printed for obvious reasons. There was still a difficulty with the American Board, and there was still in London some inability to grasp the exact bearing and the full needs of the situation. The first extract is given here simply because it illustrates the noble unselfishness of Gilmour's character, and the way in which he persistently refused to be stopped by hindrances that would have barred the road against most men. He supplied a statement of account showing that even with the most rigid economy he had exceeded his allowance by 110 taels, equivalent to from £25 to £30.

> "This leaves me with a deficit of 110 taels 63 cents, and explains how it is that I ask next year's (1874) grant to be raised to 150 taels at least. I had only two courses open to me, either to use up the grants for 1872 and 1873, and stop without accomplishing all I could, or to make full proof of my ministry and exceed the grants. Considering the cause more important than silver, I chose the latter course, and, despite the most rigid economy, exceeded to the above amount. Present circumstances enable me to make up the deficit from my own private purse, and I don't ask to be refunded, but I don't know that I shall be flush of money next year, and *do* ask that the grant may be not less than 150 taels, which is the lowest estimate I can make.
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> "As proof of the reasonableness of my request, and of my anxiety to avoid drawing on the funds of the Society beyond what is absolutely necessary, I may be allowed to state that this year, in addition to making up the lacking 110–63 taels, I walked afoot behind my caravan in the

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> desert for *weeks,* to avoid the expense of purchasing another camel."

On the question of Christian literature he placed on record some wise words, as needful now almost as when he penned them, in order to correct the notion that it is enough simply to place into the hands of a heathen a copy of the Word of God in his native tongue. The reply of Candace's eunuch, "How can I understand unless some one shall guide me?" meets the missionary of Today, as it met Philip. The opinion of the Shanghai Conference in 1890 (and emphasized by the Conference of Missionary Societies in 1934) shows that the same need is still strongly felt by the missionaries of all the societies.

> "In addition to the Scriptures and the Catechism, I think small simple books containing little portions of Scripture history or little portions of Scripture teaching would be very useful. The Bible is all very well for those

who have advanced a little, but there is very little of the narrative portions even—the simplest parts of the whole book—which you can read without encountering terrible names of persons or places, or quotations from the prophet Isaiah or Jeremiah. When a Mongol comes upon these he feels inclined to give up in despair. Even in China my experience has been that people are slow to buy a complete gospel, even at less than the paper on which it is printed costs, while they will buy with avidity very small books at almost their full value.

"Chinamen themselves notice this, and when surrounded by a crowd I have heard them remark laughingly, 'Small books go quick.' Remembering my instructions, which among other things say, 'Pause before you translate,' I have hitherto refrained, but now have a very small

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illustrated narrative in the press, another also illustrated in manuscript, and other two not illustrated in contemplation. If I find funds—the Peking branch of the Tract Society is bankrupt just now—and get them out, you shall have specimens. Probably they won't look well, being first attempts, but you need not be ashamed of the Mongol of them, as they have been written under my direction by a 'crack' native scholar, and carefully revised by Schereschewsky, who is a general linguist of good ability, and has paid so much attention to Mongolian. that he revised the Gospel by Matthew in conjunction with Mr Edkins, and is at present at work on a Mongol dictionary."

Medical missions were only in their infancy in 1874, and Gilmour in the same report describes what many another has felt. He illustrates also one of his fixed principles, namely, always do *something;* and never let the work stop simply because you cannot do what is ideally the best.

"I know very little about diseases and cures, but the little I *do* know is extremely useful. Almost every Mongol, man and woman and child, has something that wants putting right. To have studied medicine at home would have been a great help, but though I cannot hope now ever to gain a scientific knowledge of the subject, I am glad that in our hospital here I have a good opportunity of learning much from Dr Dudgeon, and all I can do now is to make the best of this good opportunity. I am told that professional men at home are suspicious of giving a little medical knowledge to young men going out as missionaries. I sided with them till I came here, but here the case is different. At home it is all very well to stand before the fire in your room, within sight of the brass plate on the doctor's door on the opposite side of the street, and

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talk about the danger of little knowledge; but when you are two weeks' journey from any assistance, and see your fellow-traveller sitting silent and swollen with violent toothache for days together, you fervently wish you

had a pair of forceps and the *dangerous* amount of knowledge. And when in remote places you have the choice of burying your servant or stopping his diarrhcea, would you prefer to talk nonsense about professional skill rather than give him a dose of chlorodyne, even though it should be at the risk of administering one drop more or less than a man who writes M.D. to his name would have done?

"I speak earnestly and from experience. No one has more detestation than I have for the quack that patters in the presence of trained skill; but from what I have seen and known of mission life, both in myself and others, since coming to North China, I think it is a little less than culpable homicide to deny a little hospital training to men who may have to pass weeks and months of their lives in places where they themselves, or those about them, may sicken and die from curable diseases before the doctor could be summoned, even supposing he could leave his post and come."

During the summer of 1874 James Gilmour continued his itinerating work among the nomads of the Plain. He met with much to discourage him, but he steadily enlarged his knowledge of the people and his acquaintance with the best methods of work among them. How difficult it was to adapt ordinary methods of teaching to their habits may be judged from the following sketch:

"My tent is not only my dwelling-house and dispensary, but also my chapel. I always endeavour to instruct the visitors and patients as far as I can. Preaching to Mongols is a little different from preaching at home

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a little different from preaching in China even. You can get a congregation of heathen Chinese to listen for, say, twenty minutes, or half an hour, or even longer; but begin to preach to a lot of Mongols, and they begin to talk to each other, or perhaps to ask you questions about your dress and your country.

"The nature of their own service is partly to blame for this. When a Mongol sends for a lama or two to read prayers in his tent, the inmates, though present, don't think it necessary to attend much to what is going on. Though they did attend, they would not be able to understand, so talking goes on among them pretty much as usual. If I were to stick myself up and begin, and start off sermonising to them, I would be treated much as they treat their own lamas; so I confine my preaching to conversations and arguments—a style of teaching which I find secures their attention."

Many, too, are the sketches in his letters and diaries of the men he met. They are all drawn with that remarkable and largely unconscious power, which he possessed so fully, of being able to see very vividly the striking points and details of passing events, and of enabling those to

whom he wrote, by his aptly chosen words, also to see exactly what passed before his eyes. One or two out of many examples must suffice:

> "This season (1874) I met a deaf and dumb man. He was uneducated, but of great quickness and intelligence. He could converse easily and readily with his fellow-Mongols by signs, and I could ask many simple questions and understand his answers without trouble. His perception was remarkable. While sitting in the dusk outside my tent, a messenger came from his father's tent to tell him that some of the sheep were missing. A single

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turn of the hand followed by a glance around, as if searching for something, was all that was required. He had been sitting quietly in the circle, looking at us talking; but the moment the communication was made he uttered an inarticulate sound betraying great excitement, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, stuck it into his boot, threw himself into the saddle, and rode off into the gathering darkness to search for the lost sheep. All agreed that he had an extra share of intelligence, and he was evidently regarded as a capable and useful member of the community.

"One of the sad sights seen was that of a sick Chinaman near his end. He was one of a company of four, who went about dressing skins of which the Mongols make garments. He had been an opium taker, and an incurable diarrhœa had seized him. At the time he was lodging with the Mongol for whom the party had come to dress skins; but the Mongol, seeing he would die, and fearing trouble and expense over his death, ordered him off the premises. Borrowing an ox-cart, his companions had him conveyed away some five or ten miles, jolted in the rude vehicle and suffering from the blazing sun, to a place where some Chinese acquaintances were digging a well. They had a tent of their own, most likely a poor, ragged, white cloth affair, open to the winds and pervious to the rain; and in this the poor man hoped he might be permitted to die. It was the dark side of the picture. The glorious summer, the green and flowery plains, the fattening flocks, the herds exulting in the deep pastures, the gay Mongols riding about, the white tents bathed in the sunlight and gleaming from afar. In the midst of all this, a feeble man, far from home and kin, sick unto death, cast forth from his poor lodging, and seeking for a place to lie down and die in. The Mongols are a hospitable race, but pray ye that ye may not get sick on their hands.

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> "On the whole I have been very well received everywhere, and have been treated with great confidence. I have sometimes wondered at the

readiness with which they take medicine from the hand of an utter stranger. One reason why they are ready to trust me, doubtless, is that going among them, they can go round my tent and see that there is nothing secret and terrible behind it; they enter it and see all that is in it. They know and see that I am utterly in their power, and, perhaps, reason that I am there with no intent to harm, because if I made trouble I could not move another step without their consent.

"In the shape of converts I have seen no result. I have not, as far as I am aware, seen anyone who even *wanted* to be a Christian; but by healing their diseases I have had opportunity to tell many of Jesus, the Great Physician."

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CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE

DURING the year 1873 James Gilmour devoted much thought to the natural and all-important question of marriage. Uncommon as he was, in so many ways, it was, perhaps, to be expected that in this great undertaking he would depart from ordinary methods. The Rev. S. E. Meech had married, in 1872, Miss Prankard, of London. After the return of Mr Edkins to England, in May 1873, Mr Gilmour went to board with Mr and Mrs Meech. There he saw the portrait of Mrs Meech's sister, and often heard her referred to in conversation. Towards the close of 1873 he took Mrs Meech into his confidence, and asked permission to enter into correspondence with her sister. The following most characteristic letters show the course of subsequent events:

"PEKING, *January* 14, 1874.

"MY DEAR PARENTS,—I have written and proposed to a girl in England. It is true I have never seen her and I know very little about her; but what I do know is good. She is the sister of Mrs Meech, and is with her mother in London. Her mother supports herself and daughter by keeping a school. One of the hindrances will be perhaps that the mother will not be willing to part with her

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daughter, as she is, no doubt, the life of the school. I ,don't know, so I have written and made the offer, and leave them to decide. If she cannot come, then there is no harm done. If she can arrange to come, then my hope is fulfilled. If the young lady says 'Yes,' she or her friends will no doubt write you, as I have asked them to do … You may think I am rash

in writing to a girl I have never seen. If you say so, I may just say that I have something of the same feeling; but what am I to do? In addition, I am very easy-minded over it all, because I have exercised the best of my thoughts on the subject, and put the whole matter into the hands of God, asking Him, if it be best to bring her, if it be not best to keep her away, and He can manage the whole thing well."

By some mischance this letter was delayed, and Mr Gilmour's relatives were startled, one March day in 1874, by receiving from an entirely unknown lady in London a letter, containing the unlooked-for statement: 'Your son, Mr Gilmour, of Peking, has asked my daughter to write to you, telling you of her decision to join him as his wife. She has wished me to write to you for her, and will be pleased to hear from you when you feel inclined to write."

The friendly intercourse that followed soon convinced Mr Gilmour's family, as any knowledge of Emily Prankard herself soon convinced all who made her acquaintance, that, however unusual it might appear, this was indeed one of the marriages made in heaven. By both parties God's blessing and guidance were invoked, upon both His benediction rested, and, after a brief separation in this world, they are now both enriched with the fuller knowledge and the perfect joy of the life beyond.

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No time was lost in the arrangements for Miss Prankard's departure to China. In a letter to his mother dated October 2, 1874, Mr Gilmour writes:

"You have seen Miss Prankard, but you have not told me what you think of her. She was delighted with her visit to Scotland and with you all. You will be glad to hear that I have had some delightful letters from her. I wrote her, and she has written me in the most unrestrained way concerning her spiritual hopes and condition, and though we have never seen each other, yet we know more of each other's inmost life and soul, than, I am quite certain, most lovers know of each other even after long personal courtship. It is quite delightful to think that even now we can talk by letter with perfect unreserve, and I tell *you* this because I know you will be glad to hear it. T knew she was a pious girl, else I would not have asked her to come out to be a missionary's wife, but she turns out better even than I thought, and I am not much afraid as to how we shall get on together."

In the course of the autumn of 1874 Miss Prankard sailed, and in a letter to the writer, December 13, 1874, Gilmour thus refers to the close of his unusual but satisfactory courtship:

"I was married last week, Tuesday, December 8!

"Mrs Meech's sister is Mrs Gilmour. We never saw each other till a week before we were married, and my friends here drew long faces and howled at me for being rash and inconsiderate. What if you don't like each other? How then? It is for life! As if I did not know all this long ago. Well, the time came, the vessel was due at Shanghai, but would not come. Mr Meech and I went down to Tientsin and waited there a fortnight, but no

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tidings. At last on the evening of Sabbath, November 29, a steamer's whistle was heard miles away down the river. It was Mr Meech's turn to preach. After sermon he and I walked away down the riverside to see what we could see. After a while a light hove round the last bend, then a green light, then the red light, then came the three lights of the steamer! We listened. It was the high-pressure engine of the steam launch which is used to lighten the deep-sea steamers before coming up the narrow river. Fifteen minutes more and she was at the landing-stage. A friend went on board. Miss Prankard was on board the *Taku,* which was still outside the bar, waiting for water to bring her over and up to the settlement. The lighter was going to unload and start down the river at five a.m., and Meech and I went in her. About eight a.m. we met the steamer coming up, and when she came abreast we saw Miss Prankard on board, but could not get from our vessel to hers. The tide was favourable for running up, and they were afraid to lose a minute, so would not stop the steamer; we did not get on board till we reached the bund at Tientsin about eleven a.m. We started for Peking next day, got there on Thursday, and were married following Tuesday.

"Our honeymoon is now almost over. I am to have only a week of it. I hope to start with Meech on a mission tri p to the country on Tuesday next."

Miss Prankard's first view of her future husband was hardly what she might have expected. Mr Meech has also sketched that scene on the river.

"The morning was cold, and Gilmour was clad in an old overcoat which had seen much service in Siberia, and had a woollen comforter round his neck, having more regard to warmth than to appearance. We had to follow

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back to Tientsin, Gilmour being thought by those on board the steamer to be the engineer!"

Two letters may be quoted in this connection. The first was to one of his most intimate Scotch friends.

"LONDON MISSION, PEKING,

"*January* 31, 1875.

"My Dear ——,—Your kind, long, and much-looked-for letter dated May 12, 1873, and August 21, 1874, reached me on January 9, 1875. Many thanks for it, but I think it would be quite as well in future to send me half the quantity in half the time, if you really find you cannot write me oftener. As I was married on December 8, 1874, to Mrs Meech's sister, that lady, Mrs Gilmour; had the great pleasure of reading your earnest, long, and reiterated warning to me not to have her. Your warning came too late. Had you posted your letter on May 12, 1873, it might have been in time, as the first letter that opened our acquaintance was written in January 1874. If nothing else will have effect with you, perhaps the thought that you might have saved, me from the fate of having an English wife may have some effect in moving you to post your letters early, even though they should not be so long and full.

"About my wife: as I want you to know her, I introduce you to her. She is a jolly girl, as much, perhaps 'more, of a Christian and a Christian missionary than I am. I don't know whether I told you how it came about. I proposed first to a Scotch girl but found I was too late; I then put myself and the direction of this affair—I mean the finding of a wife—into God's hands, asking Him to look me out one, a good one too, and very soon I found myself in a position to propose to Miss Prankard with all reasonable evidence that she was the right sort of girl, and

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with some hope that she would not disdain the offer. We had never seen each other, and had never corresponded, but she had heard much about me from people in England who knew me, and I had heard a good deal of her and seen her letters written to her sister and to her sister's husband. The first letter I wrote her was to propose, and the first letter she wrote me was to accept—romantic enough!

"I proposed in January, went up to Mongolia in spring, rode about on my camels till July, and came down to Kalgan to find that I was an accepted man! I went to Tientsin to meet her; we arrived here on Thursday and were married on Tuesday morning. We had a quiet week, then I went to the country on a nine days' tour, and came back two days before Christmas. We have been at home ever since. Such is the romance of a matter-of-fact man.

"You will see that the whole thing was gone about simply on the faith principle, and from its success I am inclined to think more and more highly of the plan. Without any gammon, I am much more happy than ever even in my day-dreams I ventured to imagine I might be. It is not only me that my wife pleases, but she has gained golden opinions from most of the people who have met her among my friends and acquaintances in Scotland and China. My parents were scared one day last year by receiving a letter from a lady in England, a lady whose name even they had not known before, stating that her daughter had decided to become *my wife*. Didn't it stir up

the old people! They had never heard a word about it! My letter to them, posted at the same time with the proposal, had been delayed in London. The young lady went to Scotland, and was with them two weeks, and came away having made such an impression on them that they wrote me from home to say that 'though I

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had searched the country for a couple of years I could not have made a better choice.'

"Perhaps I am tiring you, but I want to let you know all about it, and to assure you that you need not be the least shy of me or of my English wife. She is a good lassie, any quantity better than me, and just as handy as a Scotch lass would have been. It was great fun for her to read your tirade about English wives and your warning about her. She is a jolly kind of body, and does not take. offence, but I guess if she comes across you she will wake you up a bit."

The other letter was to Miss Bremner, and referred to the part Gilmour was to take in her marriage in 1883 to his brother Alexander:

"Now as to your affair, a much more serious matter. Alex has said something about my part. I want to take part, but only such a small part as will make it true to say, 'assisted by the brother of the bridegroom.' It is for you and Dr Macfadyen to say what that *small* part shall be; all I have to say about it, the smaller the better.

"My experiences of the ceremonies of social Christianity have been mixed a little. In England I baptized a child by a wrong name, and had actually to do it again. In China on a similar occasion I began by saying, 'Friends, God has given you this child,' when the seeming father stopped me, and explained that God had not given them this child, but he himself had picked it up in a field where it had been exposed.

"I think I married only one Chinese couple, and to this day I doubt if either the one or the other uttered a syllable where they should have said, 'I do.' In my own case I think I must have said 'I will' in a feeble voice, for

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my wife when her turn came sung out 'I will' in a voice that startled herself and me, and made it ominous how much *will* she was going to have in the matter. Wishing you all blessings,—Believe me yours truly,

"JAMES GILMOUR."

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CHAPTER VI

"IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN"

THE year following the marriage, owing to the absence of Dr Dudgeon on furlough, was spent almost entirely in Peking. In his absence Mr Gilmour took charge of what may be called the unprofessional work of the hospital, the purely medical superintendence being in the hands of Dr Bushell of the British Legation. He varied this work and the routine of ordinary mission duties by an occasional trip to other centres where fairs were being held, in the company of Mr Murray, of the National Bible Society of Scotland, for the purpose of selling Christian books. There was often a very keen friendly rivalry as to which could sell the most, and not unfrequently very large quantities of tracts and booklets were thus put into circulation.

Early in 1875, with the object of enabling his colleagues and his friends among the other Missions which have centres in Peking the better to realise what life in Mongolia was like, he set up his Mongol tent in the compound, and invited them in companies of five or seven to partake of a Mongol dinner, cooked in Mongol fashion, and served as on the Plain. His diary records that five such entertainments were necessary, the utmost limit

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of the tent accommodation being reached on each occasion.

"The guests came," we are told, "at the appointed time, and the fire of wood was lighted in the middle of the tent. While the guests sat around on felt spread upon the ground, Gilmour proceeded to cook the millet and the mutton which furnished the feast. When all was ready a blessing was asked and the meal was eaten. On one occasion a reverend gentleman was called on to ask the blessing, but declined, feeling apparently that what he was expected to eat was not of such a quality that he could ask a blessing on it. Gilmour used often to refer to this with much amusement, though at the time he felt some chagrin."

In 1876 the Mongolian trips were resumed. No colleague had yet been secured for him, and, with a bravery and consecration beyond all praise, Mrs Gilmour accompanied him. This she did not once simply. For the first journey the novelty of the experience and the conviction that she could at any rate help to preserve her husband from the feeling of utter loneliness, which had been so hard to bear in past years, were powerful reasons. But she went a second and a third time. She went after the

novelty had worn off, after she had learned by very stern experience how hard and rough the life was, after previous exposure had told but too severely upon her physical strength. And thus she deserves the eulogy passed upon her by her husband: "She is a better missionary than I." Comparisons of this kind are obviously out of the question. But it would be hard to find a more beautiful illustration of true wifely affection

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than the love for her husband that made her willing to share his Mongol tent as readily as the Peking compound. And if James Gilmour manifested a Christ-like love for the ignorant and stolid Mongols, so also did the delicately nurtured and refined lady who, in order to do her part in winning them to the Saviour, endured privations, faced perils, and bore a daily and hourly series of trials so irksome and so repugnant that no motive short of all-absorbing love to Jesus Christ is strong enough to account for her endurance.

Here are some pictures of what this life meant to Mrs Gilmour. The first journey which they took together lasted from April 4 until September 23, 1876, one hundred and thirty-six days being passed in Mongolia itself.

> "On the evening of April 25 we came upon our servants' tent, already pitched beside some Mongol tents near a stream. Our things were unloaded from the Chinese cart, which soon drove off and left us fairly launched out on the Plain. We had two tents-one for ourselves and one for our servants. They were both alike, made of common blue Chinese cloth outside, and of commoner white Chinese cloth inside. It was originally intended that our tent should be private for our retirement and for Mrs Gilmour's use; but we soon found that this idea could not be carried out. The Mongols are so much in the habit of going freely into everybody's tent in Mongolia that we found we could not retain our tent to ourselves without running risk of offending them by our seeming haughtiness. That they should think us uncongenial and distant would have been an obstacle to our success among them. So we made a virtue of necessity, and kept open house in the literal sense of the word. At

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> our meals, our devotions, our ablutions, there they were—much amused and interested, of course. It was sometimes annoying to have them so much and so constantly about, but there was no help for it, and soon we began to care little for them, and took their presence not only as a matter of course, but without being disturbed by it.
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> "One advantage of this sort of public life was that Mrs Gilmour, being almost constantly in the presence of the spoken language, picked it up very

accurately and very rapidly. It is hardly possible to conceive a better plan of becoming easily and well acquainted with any language than that of thus living where it is impossible not to hear it in almost constant use.

"Another advantage of this sort of public life was, that one gained the friendship of the people. This perfect freedom of intercourse pleased them much, and even conciliated those not very friendly inclined. It was quite common to hear visitors remark that, while other foreigners in Mongolia are distant and harsh, these people were gentle and accessible, and that such friendly people did a great deal to remove the unfavourable impressions made by other less considerate travellers.

"Our sojourn extended to the end of August, giving us a little over four months at a stretch of tent life. In that time we had experience of many kinds of weather. At first it was cold. Even in May ice was to be seen in the mornings. Then came heat, premature and burning, and all the more trying for ourselves and cattle on account of the lack of rain. Then we had a furious tempest, which raged for about thirty-six hours, overturning our covered cart and threatening to sweep ourselves and our tents away. We had to load down our tent ropes with bags of earth, stones, sod, the bodies of our carts, wheels, boxes, and anything we could find, and even then we had but a precarious existence. Every now and then, by day and

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by night, there would arise a shout from the one tent or the other, and amid the roar of the wind we heard cries for the hammer and the spare tent-pins. We managed to fix ourselves without being blown away, and when the storm was over we patched our riven tents, and were thankful we had weathered it so well. Then came the summer rains—late in season, it is true, but great in strength—pouring and lashing and roaring, the great drops bursting through our rent cloth, broken up into spray and 'looking like pepper shaken from a box. We had waterproof sheets, but it was next to impossible to keep anything dry. While the rain lasted we sat huddled in our rain cloaks, or, spade in hand, cut new channels for suddenly extemporised streams and pools that grew larger and continued to come closer to our bedding and boxes. As soon as the sun returned, there was a general drying of garments, mattresses, and sheepskin robes. The heat was perhaps the most trying of our meteorological experiences; but even that passed away at last, and before we had left the plains night frost had reappeared, covering the pools about well-mouths with thin sheets of ice.

"Later in, the season, one afternoon, the loungers in the tent looked out and remarked, 'The Mandarin has come,' and gave place to a richly dressed, corpulent Mongol, who entered the tent, followed by one of his servants. Salutations over, he soon showed his colours and unmasked his batteries. He had come to fight, and we both went at it tooth and nail. He had read a good deal, and had come evidently prepared and primed, not in any spirit of unfriendliness, but under the evident conviction that a better case could

be made out for Buddhism than for Christianity. The tent was crammed with eager listeners, and we reasoned together from the Creation to the finish, including all manner of side issues and important

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questions. It was a long time before he could be convinced that our Jesus was not spoken of and made known in the Buddhist classics. When he was at length satisfied (on that point), he wanted to know about the Trinity; how men could get good; how it was right that men should escape punishment due to their misdeeds by praying to Jesus; why God allowed animals, such as starving dogs, to lead a life of suffering; why God did not keep sin from entering the world; how could Jesus come, when it is said He is always with us; and how about the souls who died before Jesus came.

"At last the sun got low, and the Mandarin, with many words of friendship, rode away, promising to come another day. But he never came."

In a later journey they had a very narrow escape from one of the frequent perils of this tent life:

"In Mongolia we had one rather serious adventure. The south edge of the Plain is famed for storms, and the night we camped there, just after dark, began one of the fiercest thunderstorms I can remember having seen. The wind roared, the rain dashed, the tent quivered; the thunder rattled with a metallic ring, like shafts of iron dashing against each other, as it darted along a sheet-iron sky; the water rose in the tent till part of our bed was afloat. It was hardly possible to hear each other speak; but amid and above all the din of the tempest rose one sound not to be mistaken, the roar of rushing water. There was a river to right of us, but the sound came more from the left. Venturing out, I found there was a great swift-flowing river on both sides of us; that we could not move from the little piece of elevated land plain on which we had our tent; and that a few inches more water, or an obstacle getting into the path of the upper river, would

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send the full force of the current down on our tents. Flocks, herds, men are said to be swept away now and again in Mongolia, and for an hour our case seemed doubtful; but about 11 p.m. the storm ceased and the danger was over, and, though we had hardly anything left, we went to sleep, thanking God for His preserving mercy."

Courageous, undoubtedly, Mrs Gilmour was; her example of self-sacrifice in the Master's cause was lofty in itself, and is stimulating to every Christian mind. Yet it is to be greatly feared that the first of these journeys aggravated, if it did not actually develop, the disease from which she ultimately died. She found the ceaseless round of millet and mutton so unpalatable as at the last to be able hardly to eat at all; and experience

of tent life was needful before she could realise how absolutely devoid it was of almost everything that a European lady looks upon as essential to daily existence, and thus make adequate preparation for the life. Yet, in 1878, she not only accompanied her husband again, better equipped by reason of previous experience, but she also took with her their infant boy.

The winter of 1876 in Peking was devoted to work more or less directly bearing upon the Christian conquest of the nomad tribes.

> "Since returning from Mongolia I have had here a teacher whom I had come from the plains. I read some Buddhist classics with him, then had him write to my dictation some of the more striking incidents narrated in the Book of Daniel; then finally had him write for me an explanation of the way of salvation through Jesus. The extracts from Daniel were written mostly with the

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> idea of accustoming him to my dictation; but the explanation of Christianity was a tract that I had long wanted to write, in which I sought to make it as plain as possible, not only that Jesus does save, but also that there is no salvation through any other name. The Religious Tract Society has consented to print for me both the extract from Daniel and the explanation of Christianity."

During 1877 the ever-recurring question, inevitable, perhaps, and yet very paralysing to any steady progress, as to whether it was really worth while to continue labour in such a sterile field, came up once more for discussion. In an elaborate report, designed rather to elicit the views of the home authorities than to express his own, dated August 18, 1877, Mr Gilmour depicts rapidly and clearly his relations, on the one hand, to the workers in the station of the American Board at Kalgan, and, on the other, to his colleagues of the North China Committee of the London Society. The American Board had sent out another missionary, and Mr Gilmour was at first inclined to the view that, although working independently, they might yet act practically as colleagues.

> "In addition, the new man, Rev. W. P. Sprague, and lone day undertook to climb a mountain together, and, by the time we got half-way up, we discovered that our ideas about working together quite agreed, and that there was a fair and good prospect of our making good harmonious colleagues in one work, though we belonged to different societies and hailed from different nations. Here, then, the thing seemed to be accomplished; here was a colleague ready to my hand, or I to his."

But Mrs Gulick, a most energetic and enthusiastic missionary to the Mongols, died, her husband was

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invalided to Japan, and Mr Sprague found himself with the whole mission on his shoulders.

> "If things are to remain as they are, it amounts pretty much to this, that in the warmer months of the year I can travel through parts of Mongolia teaching the Gospel and dispensing medicines; the rest of the year I can turn my attention to Chinese work in Peking. This is a pleasant enough arrangement for me, but it is not a very vigorous prosecution of the work of the Mongol mission. On the other hand, such is the fewness of people to be reached in Mongolia that it is only by alternating these periods of deprivation with seasons of activity among the Chinese that a man can keep his spirit alive.
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> "As regards the opinion of other members of the Committee here, I have never called for any formal expression of it, nor have they (the members of Committee) ever been invited to discuss the question of the Mongol mission in committee, but I know their individual opinions in an informal way. Messrs. Meech and Barradale don't say much; Mr Owen thinks we will never do much in Mongolia working upon so distant a base as Peking; Mr Lees thinks it a pity to take up such a seemingly unproductive field while so many more promising fields call for attention; he moreover thinks that the only way to do much for Mongolia is through China; Dr Edkins thinks I spend too much time and labour over the Mongols, his idea being seemingly a combination of Mongol and Chinese work, with a preponderating tendency towards Chinese; Dr Dudgeon has always regarded the Mongol mission as hardly practicable.
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> "On the principle, however, of *Sow beside all waters,* and *Thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that,* perhaps it is well that the Gospel should be exhibited to the Mongols also, and if anyone is to go to Mongolia, perhaps

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> many people would have more disqualifications than myself."

In 1877 there was what seemed to be a very hopeful development of Christian work in Shantung, and Mr Gilmour and Mr Owen visited that district and baptized a large number of converts. Still later, Dr Edkins and Mr Owen, on another visit, baptized some two hundred people. With reference to this latter ingathering Mr Gilmour wrote, "I much regret that we have not some definite system of putting men on a period of probation … About these two hundred I have nothing to say, but of the hundred odd Mr Owen and I baptized in November I have to admit that, making all allowances, some of them cause me more anxiety than satisfaction." There was, unfortunately, only too much ground for this fear. Ultimately the movement dwindled almost as rapidly as it had

developed, and with little permanent benefit to the missionary cause. Shantung had been devastated by famine, locusts, and cholera. Missionaries brought relief to the stricken people, giving both money and food. Large numbers were drawn towards the new religion by this example of its deeds, and most of the converts had professed Christianity in the hope of getting something by its means. But this incident brought to a head a divergence of view as to the whole conduct of affairs in the Peking mission between the two older missionaries, Dr Edkins and Dr Dudgeon, and their three younger colleagues, Mr Gilmour, Mr Owen, and Mr Meech. Into this strenuous and protracted controversy we do not propose to enter. Both parties were actuated by high and honourable motives; both were able to express their

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views pointedly, and with all appropriate force. In the end the view advocated by Mr Gilmour triumphed. This was that, so far as possible, no pecuniary inducement whatever, either by way of payment for services, or even employment in connection with the mission, should be allowed to influence a Chinaman's judgment in the acceptance of Christianity. Gilmour could take an active part in the discussions only during his winter residence in Peking. But the reader who has followed its history so far will be quite prepared to learn that he made up for the infrequency of his participation in the controversy by the energy which he displayed when he did so. And in depicting Gilmour as he was, it is essential that he should be seen when opposing no less than, as he much preferred to be in all matters affecting the welfare of the mission, in the heartiest concord with his colleagues. And yet his keenest opponents would cordially assent to the following statement by one who took an active part in all the discussions. It is mainly for the purpose of emphasising this testimony that the matter is referred to here.

> "When in Peking Gilmour took his full share in the debates which were constantly arising. Although he could and did argue to the extremest point, and very hot and sharp words might be spoken during the discussion, he harboured no bitterness of feeling against his opponents. After excited argument he would get up and say, 'Nevertheless I love you.' Nor were these empty words. He was kind, and willing to help all, and was doing acts of service continually for those who opposed him most."

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Towards the close of 1878 the Rev. J. S. Barradale, of the Tientsin Mission, died, leaving the Rev. J. Lees alone without a Chinese-speaking

helper. Mr Gilmour sympathised deeply with him in his loss, and wrote to say that, so long as Mr Lees was thus left alone, he would be glad to make two trips annually to his country stations, either *with* him or *for* him. Mr Gilmour's journal of this work is not only a record of the willingness with which he added gladly to his own heavy labours in order to assist a colleague; but it also gives some most realistic pictures of what ordinary life in China was like, and under what conditions evangelistic itineration there is carried on. Some of the districts visited had just been devastated by a severe famine.

"From Tientsin to Hsiao Chang is five days' journey. Three hours out from Tientsin we came upon some dogs feasting on a corpse lying at a cross-road. The dogs belonged to cottagers near, but no attempt was made by the owners to keep them away; no one took the trouble to bury the body or cover it up even. Later on we passed through one famine-devastated district. Half the houses in the villages were unroofed; large tracts of land were untilled; the landscape was almost entirely destitute of animal life; travellers were nowhere to be seen; round the villages the little stacks of straw and fuel were not to be seen; the lanes were silent; no dogs, no cocks and hens, no pigs; no groups of children playing or running after the foreigner as he passed by; and the words of Scripture came to my mind, 'the land desolate without inhabitant.' We continued to pass these desolations for about sixty English miles. We stopped a night in one of these ruined villages, and Mr Lees took me round

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the place to see the nature and extent of the destruction. Closer inspection revealed even more ruin than a mere traveller's passing look would detect; for, evidently, some care had been taken to leave house walls and boundary walls on the street standing, so as to hide some part of the destruction, and thus make things look better than they really were.

"Natives of the place gave us numbers, which showed the population was then estimated at not much, if any, more than half the former population. It was expressly stated, however, that the missing half were not regarded as all dead; very many were dead, had died in the place, but many had gone elsewhere—in most cases no one knew where. Of these some few would doubtless return; but it is to be feared that the mortality in a hard year among famine refugees is very large, and of those who left their homes and native places, the few that may eventually return will be very few, I fear.

"Doesn't the Bible say that it is a harder fate to die of famine than to die by the sword—to die stricken through for want of the fruits of the earth? But of all those who died in the famine in North China there is one class whose case is perhaps more distressing than ordinary. A large number of people seem to have died just as the harvest—a plentiful one—ripened. Through all these hard dreary months, when, day after day, month after

month, they looked for and longed for rain, those I now speak of struggled through, kept up hope, fared hard, hoped eagerly, and at last saw the rain come, saw the crops flourishing, saw them beginning to ripen, congratulated themselves and others on the prospect of abundant food and better days. But they were to see it with their eyes, but not to eat thereof. As far as could be gathered from the natives themselves, the case would seem to be thus.

"The great mass of the population was much reduced

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in bodily strength by the long period of half-starvation they went through; summer and early autumn came with the rains and the attendant ague, which last—the ague—still more reduced the strength of their already emaciated frames. You can imagine them, with lean faces and hungry eyes, tottering about the fields, and counting the days that must yet elapse before the grain would ripen. The rage of hunger was no longer to be borne; they anticipated by a few days the ripening; took the grain, still a little green—perhaps sometimes very green—and put it into the pot. But here again was another difficulty. The fuel used is grain stalks, and the famine deprived them at once of food and fuel. Green grain they might cook, but green-grain stalks would not burn. Fuel was thus deficient; and was it wonderful if, as they stood round the pot, and the fuel was deficient, their patience should fail them and they should fall upon the food half cooked? That was bad enough; but that is not all. The Chinese have nearly as little self-control as children; and is it to be wondered at if, when at last, after long months of the slow torture of unappeased hunger, they found a full meal before them, they should have eaten to the full? When a man emaciated from having gone through a famine, and further enfeebled after repeated prostrations by ague, at length rises up and gorges himself with farinaceous food, half ripe and half cooked, the consequences are not difficult to divine. Diarrhœa and dysentery set in, and became fearfully prevalent—not only prevalent, but peculiarly fatal. To make matters worse, medicines in that part of the country are dear; the people were too poor to get medical help, and great numbers who had lived to see the famine end and prosperity return, lived only to see the prosperity, and to die when it touched them. The famine fever in summer seems to have been fearfully prevalent. It is said

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that in a single courtyard two or three people would be lying about the gate, two or three under the shadow of some house, two or three more inside the house—all stricken down with fever. The air of some villages is said to have been loaded with the effluvia to such an extent that one riding along the street perceptibly discerned the taint in the atmosphere. The fever was deadly too, but evidently not so deadly in proportion as the autumn dysentery. Frequently, when talking to a boy, we would hear he was an orphan, and, on inquiry, he told that his father had died in autumn; frequently,

in talking to a woman, we would hear that she was a widow, and, on asking when her husband died, the reply was, 'Autumn.'

"We reached Hsiao Chang in a snowstorm on Saturday afternoon. A few of the people, doubtless, heard of our arrival; but those of the other villages probably did not know we had come; so that our being there, perhaps, did not materially increase the number of the congregation that assembled next day (Sunday). Sunday was a dull, uncomfortable day; the ground covered with snow; the sky still covered with clouds; no sunshine; yet there was a congregation of about one hundred and thirty, of whom eighty (about) would be women, and fifty (about) be men. The next Sabbath, January 26, was still dull; the congregation numbered about two hundred and eighty-men, say, one hundred and thirty; women, say, one hundred and fifty. Mr Lees took the women into the chapel. I took the men outside in another court, and preached to them from a terrace which gave me a commanding view of my congregation. Mr Lees had too little ventilation, I had too much of it; but both of our congregations listened well, though there was no sun, though the cold was intense, and though stray flakes of snow wandered slowly down among us as we worshipped. The next Sabbath, February 2, was fine. All except

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adherents were excluded, and the congregation numbered about eighty men, and one hundred and twenty women. Twelve men and seven women were baptized.

"The most novel feature of the work I noticed was the eagerness displayed to learn and sing hymns. Sometimes poor old women, from whom we could not extract much Catechism information about the unity in trinity and other theological mysteries, brightened up their old wrinkled faces when asked if they could sing, and when asked to give us a specimen of their singing, would raise their cracked and quavering voices and go through 'There is a happy land,' or 'The Great Physician,' or 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' a good deal out of tune here and there, it is true, but on the whole creditably as regards music, and with an apparent earnestness and feeling that was hard to witness with dry eyes. And if the old women sang thus, what of the young people? They seemed to revel in hymns. The old, big, orthodox hymn-book used in our chapels got a good deal of patronage and attention; but their great favourites were those in a small collection of the Sankey revival hymns translated (with a few exceptions) and published by Mr Lees. These hymns contain good gospel, seem to be easily learned, and are set to tunes which the Chinese seem never to sing themselves tired of. The preachers have mastered a goodly number of them, and teach them to all comers; but, Mr Lees being a singer, of course, when he arrived, there were high singing festivals, and the practice at evening prayers was sometimes so vigorous and prolonged that the tympanum of one of my ears began to show symptoms of defeat. These hymns I regard as a most powerful auxiliary to the other Gospel agencies at work, and I hope a great deal of good from them.

"Every Chinaman wants looking after. Even the best and most trustworthy men are all the better for being

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well and carefully superintended. In fact, the better a man is, the better he pays for being well looked after. The present state of country mission work in North China calls for careful supervision in an especial degree. Unforeseen circumstances arise that need prompt action where a wrong course of action may be disastrous; something or other happens that dismays the whole of the little Christian community; something or other happens that lifts them up into pride; the Christians are like little islands of Christianity isolated in a vast ocean of heathenism, and the waves seem to threaten to swallow them up. The missionary, simply by going and putting in an appearance, or by giving a little simple advice, or by speaking a few words of encouragement, or by devising a few simple methods, or making a few simple arrangements, can often keep the Church out of moral danger, infuse new hope and courage to the members and preachers, and, under God, put fresh life and vigour into the whole concern. As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth a man the face of his friend; and this is true in an especial degree of a missionary and his preachers and converts."

A short time before he returned to England on his first furlough he drew up a report, in which he places on record some of the results of his ten years' experience of Mongol life and habits.

"On one occasion I was living some weeks in, a Mongol's tent. It was late in the year. Lights were put out soon after dark. The nights were long in reality, and, in such unsatisfactory surroundings as the discomforts of a poor tent and doubtful companions, the nights seemed longer than they were. At sunrise I was only too glad to escape from smoke and everything else to the retirement of the crest of a low ridge of hills near the tent. This,

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perhaps the most natural thing in the world for a foreigner, was utterly inexplicable to the Mongols. The idea that any man should get out of his bed at sunrise and climb a hill for nothing! He must be up to mischief! He must be secretly taking away the luck of the land! This went on for some time, the Mongols all alive with suspicion, and the unsuspecting foreigner retiring regularly morning after morning, till at length a drunken man blurted out the whole thing, and openly stated the conviction that the inhabitants had arrived at, namely, that this extraordinary morning walk of the foreigner on the hill crest boded no good to the country. To remain among the people I had to give up my morning retirement.

"The Mongols are very suspicious of seeing a foreigner writing. What *can* he be up to? they say among themselves. Is he taking notes of the capabilities of the country? Is he marking out a road map, that so he can return guiding an army? Is he, as a wizard, carrying off the good luck of

the country in his notebook? These, and a great many others, are the questions that they ask among themselves and put to the foreigner when they see him writing; and if he desires to conciliate the goodwill of the people, and to win their confidence, the missionary must abstain from walking and writing while he is among them.

"On another point, too, a missionary must be careful, He must not go about shooting. Killing beasts or birds the Mongols regard as peculiarly sinful, and anyone who wished to teach them religious truth would make the attempt under great disadvantage if he carried and used a gun. This, however, is a prejudice that it is not so difficult to refrain from offending.

"The diseases presented for treatment are legion, but the most common cases are skin diseases and diseases of the eye and teeth. Perhaps rheumatism is *the* disease of

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Mongolia; but the manner of life and customs of the Mongols are such that it is useless to attempt to cure it. Cure it today, it is contracted again tomorrow. Skin diseases present a fair field for a medical missionary. They are so common, and the Mongolian treatment of them is so far removed from common sense, that anyone with a few medicines and a little intelligence has ample opportunity of benefiting many sufferers. The same may be said of the eye. The glare of the sun on the Plain at all seasons, except when the grass is fresh and green in summer, the blinding sheen from the snowy expense in winter, and the continual smoke that hangs like a cloud two or three feet above the floor of the tent, all combine to attack the eye. Eye diseases are therefore very common. The lama medicines seem to be able to do nothing for such cases, and a few remedies in a foreigner's hands work cures that seem wonderful to the Mongols.

"In many cases, when a Mongol applies to his doctor, he simply extends his hand, and expects that the doctor, by simply feeling his pulse, will be able to tell, not only the disease, but what will cure it. As soon as the doctor has felt the pulse of one hand, the patient at once extends the other hand that the pulse may be felt there also, and great surprise is manifested when a foreigner begins his diagnosis of a case by declining the proffered wrist and asking questions.

"The question of 'How did you get this disease?' often elicits some curiously superstitious replies. One man lays the blame on the stars and constellations. Another confesses that when he was a lad he was mischievous, and dug holes in the ground or cut shrubs on the hill, and it is not difficult to see how he regards disease as a punishment for digging, since by digging worms are killed; but what cutting wood on a hill can have to do with sin it is harder to see, except it be regarded

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as stealing the possessions of the spiritual lord of the locality. In consulting a doctor, too, a Mongol seems to lay a deal of stress on the belief that it is his *fate* to be cured by the medical man in question, and, if he finds relief, often says that his meeting this particular doctor and being cured is the result of prayers made at some previous time.

"One difficulty in curing Mongols is that they frequently, when supplied with medicines, depart entirely from the doctor's instructions when they apply them; and a not unfrequent case is that of the patient who, after applying to the foreigner for medicine and getting it, is frightened by his success, or scared by some lying report of his neighbours, or staggered at the fact that the foreigner would not feel his pulse, or feel it at one wrist only, lays aside the medicine carefully and does not use it at all.

"In Mongolia, too, a foreigner is often asked to perform absurd, laughable, or impossible cures. One man wants to be made clever, another to be made fat, another to be cured of insanity, another of tobacco, another of whisky, another of hunger, another of tea; another wants to be made strong, so as to conquer in gymnastic exercises; most men want medicine to make their beards grow; while almost every man, woman, and child wants to have his or her skin made as white as that of the foreigner.

"When a Mongol is convinced that his case is hopeless he takes it very calmly, and bows to his fate, whether it be death or chronic disease; and Mongol doctors, and Mongol patients too, after a succession of failures, regard the affliction as a thing fated, to be unable to overcome which implies no lack of medical ability on the doctor's part.

"Of all the healing appliances in the hands of a foreigner none strikes the fancy of a Mongol so much as

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the galvanic battery, and it is rather curious that almost every Mongol who sees it and tried its effect exclaims what a capital thing it would be for examining accused persons. It would far surpass whipping, beating, or suspending. Under its torture a guilty man could not but 'confess.' Some one in England has advocated the use of the galvanic battery in place of the cat in punishing criminals, and it is rather curious to note the coincidence of the English and Mongol mind.

"The Mongol doctors are not, it would seem, quite unacquainted with the properties of galvanism. It is said that they are in the habit of prescribing the loadstone ore, reduced to powder, as efficacious when applied to sores, and one man hard of hearing had been recommended by a lama to put a piece of loadstone into each ear and chew a piece of iron in his mouth!

"Divination is another point on which Mongols are troublesome. It never for a moment enters their head that a man so intelligent and well fitted out

with appliances as a foreigner seems to them to be cannot divine. Accordingly they come to him to divine for them where they should camp to be lucky and get rich, when a man who has gone on a journey will return, why no news has been received from a son or husband who is serving in the army, where they should dig a well so as to get plenty of good water near the surface, whether it would be fortunate for them to venture on some trading speculation, whether they should go on some projected journey, in what direction they should search for lost cattle, or, more frequently than any of the above, they come, men and women, old and young, to have the general luck of their lives examined into. Great is their amazement when the foreigner confesses his ignorance of such art, and greater still is their incredulity.

"The great obstacles to success in doctoring the

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Mongols are two: First, most of the afflicted Mongols suffer from chronic diseases for which almost nothing can be done; second, in many cases, where alleviation or cures are effected, they are only of short duration, as no amount of explanation or exhortation seems sufficient to make them aware of the importance of guarding against causes of disease. But, notwithstanding all this, many cures can be effected on favourable subjects, and the fact that the missionary carries medicines with him and attempts to heal, and that without money and without price, aids the missionary cause by bringing him into friendly communication with many who would doubtless hold themselves aloof from anyone who approached them in no other character but that of a teacher of Christianity."

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CHAPTER VII

THE VISIT TO ENGLAND IN 1882

FROM 1880 onwards Mrs Gilmour suffered severely from illness, and medical advisers recommended at length the rest and change of a visit to England. Mr Gilmour's furlough was also nearly due. Consequently, in the spring of 1882, he and his family returned to England. This visit was helpful and memorable in many ways. The rest so thoroughly well earned was greatly enjoyed. The return to civilisation, the society of loved relatives and friends, the comforts of ordinary English life, and the change of thought and occupation which these involved—all reacted happily and refreshingly upon both Mr Gilmour and his wife.

But a sojourn at home is not by any means a season of entire rest for the jaded worker. The Churches constantly need the stimulus and awakening that are best supplied by the men who have been filling the hard places in the field. Gilmour also was so full of enthusiasm for his work, and so eager in his desire to benefit the Mongols, that he would doubtless have found for himself many opportunities of pleading their cause, had not the authorities of the London Missionary Society, following their usual custom, furnished him with a long list of deputation

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engagements. Into these he threw himself with an energy that very greatly enlarged the circle of his friendship, secured very many new supporters for the missionary cause, and obtained for himself on the part of many, a devout, prayerful sympathy for the remainder of his earthly service.

He had brought with him a large quantity of manuscript material dealing with his twelve years of Mongol life and experience. From this he prepared the volume which was published by the Religious Tract Society in April 1883, under the title of *Among the Mongols.*

The book was very cordially welcomed by the press, and we single out for quotation a portion of one review which stands out pre-eminent not only for its literary quality, but also as placing on record the impression James Gilmour was able to make upon men entirely ignorant of him and his work by the simple narrative of his experiences. It appeared in the *Spectator* for April 28, 1883.

> "We have a difficulty in passing judgment on this book. It is possible, even probable, that the impression it has made on us is individual to this reviewer, and due to an accident which, with other readers, will not repeat itself. Having time, and an interest in nomads, he read a page or two, and read on, and read on, for five hours, till he had finished the book—which is much too short—fascinated, lost, carried out of himself and England. He was in Mongolia, sitting under a blue-cloth tent, with savage dogs howling around, and gazing outside, through the doorless doorway, on a vast panorama of poor tuft grass, stretching away to huge black hills in the distance, and Tartars on camels, Tartars on horses, Tartars on

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> springless, unbreakable ox-carts, hastening up to the encampment; while inside he listened to a quiet Scotchman, resignedly yet clearly explaining everything in a voice—there was the puzzle. Where in the world had the reviewer heard that voice before, with its patient monotone, as well known as his oldest friend's, its constant digressions and 'reflections,' its sentences

so familiar, yet so new, sentences which, as each topic came up, he could write before they were uttered. 'James Gilmour, M.A.' Never knew him, or heard of him; yet here was he, talking exactly as some one else had years ago talked a hundred times. So oppressive at last became the 'will-o'the-wisp reminiscence, that the reviewer stopped, after an account of the Desert of Gobi, and deliberately read it through again, in search of a clue which might reawaken his memory. I t was all in vain, and it was not till another hundred pages had been passed, always under the impression of that bewildering reminiscence, that he exclaimed to himself, 'That's it! Robinson Crusoe has turned missionary, lived years in Mongolia, and written a book about it.' That is this book. To anyone who, perhaps from early neglect, does not perceive this truth, our judgment will seem erroneous; but to anyone who does, we may quite fearlessly appeal. The student of *Robinson Crusoe* never expected that particular pleasure in this life, and he will never have it again; but for this once he has it to the full. Mr James Gilmour, though a man of whom any country may be proud, is not a deep thinker, and not a bright writer, and not a man with the gift of topographical, or, indeed, any other kind of description. He thinks nothing extraordinary, and has nothing to say quotable. There is a faint, far-off humour in him, humour sternly repressed; but that, so far as we know, is the only quality in his writing which makes him *littérateur* at all. But Heaven, which has denied him many

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gifts, has given him one in full measure—the gift of Defoe, the power of so stating things that the reader not only believes them, but sees them in bodily presence, that he is there wherever the author chooses to place him, under the blue tent, careering over the black ice of Lake Baikal, or hobnobbing in tea with priests as unlike Englishmen as it is possible for human beings to be, yet, such is his art, in nowise unintelligible or strange. It may be, as we have said, that it is an individual impression, but we never read, save once, the kind of book in our lives, did not deem it possible ever again to meet with this special variety of unconscious literary skill. We are aware of a dozen shortcomings, of a hundred points upon which Mr Gilmour ought to have given light, and has not; but there has been, if our experience serves us at all, no book quite like this book since *Robinson Crusoe;* and *Robinson Crusoe* is not better, does not tell a story more directly, or produce more instantaneous and final conviction. Heaven help us all, if Mr Gilmour tells us that he has met any unknown race in Mongolia, say, people with the power of making themselves invisible, for Tyndall will believe him, and Huxley account for them, and the *Illustrated London News* publish their portraits—in the stage of invisibility. We do not say the book is admirable, or perfect, or anything else superlative; but we do say, and this with sure confidence, that no one who begins it will leave it till the narrative ends, or doubt for an instant, whether he knows Defoe or not, that he has been enchained by something separate and distinct in literature, something almost uncanny in the way it has gripped him, and made him see for ever a scene he never expected to see.

"We do not know that we have any more to say about the book. Its merit is that, and no other; and we do not suppose anybody ever proved *Robinson Crusoe's* value by extracts. But we must say a word or two about the

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author and his subject. Mr Gilmour, though a Scotchman, is apparently attached to the London Mission, and seems to have quitted Peking for Mongolia on an impulse to teach Christ to Tartars. He could not ride, he did not know Mongolian, he had an objection to carry arms, and he had no special fitness except his own character, which he knew nothing about, for the work. Nevertheless, he went, and stayed years, living on half-frozen prairies and deserts under open tents, on fat mutton, sheeps' tails particularly, tea, and boiled millet, eating only once a day because Mongols do, and in all things, except lying, stealing, and prurient talk, making himself a lama. As he could not ride, he rode for a month over six hundred miles of dangerous desert, where the rats undermine the grass, and at the end found that that difficulty has disappeared for ever. As he could not talk, he 'boarded out' with a lama, listened and questioned, and questioned and listened, till he knew Mongolian as Mongols know it, till his ears became so open that he was painfully aware that Mongol conversation, like that of most Asiatics, is choked with *doubles entendres*. As for danger, he had made up his mind not to carry arms, not to be angry with a heathen, happen what might, and—though he does not mention this—not to be afraid of anything whatever, neither dogs nor thieves, nor hunger nor the climate; and he kept those three resolutions. If ever on earth there lived a man who kept the law of Christ, and could give proofs of it, and be absolutely unconscious that he was giving them, it is this man, whom the Mongols he lived among called 'our Gilmour.' He wanted, naturally enough, sometimes to meditate away from his hosts, and sometimes to take long walks, and sometimes to geologise, but he found all these things roused suspicion—for why should a stranger want to be alone; might it not be 'to steal away the luck of the land'?—and as a suspected missionary is a useless

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missionary, Mr Gilmour gave them all up, and sat endlessly in tents, among lamas. And he says incidentally that his fault is impatience, a dislike to be kept waiting!"

The book met with a ready and wide acceptance. It soon "found its public." It was only to be expected that many of the friends and supporters of the London Missionary Society would welcome it. And there are others, like the reviewer, who "have time and an interest in nomads," who were certain to consult it. But in addition to these special classes the book did good service in some cases, by deepening the impression already made by other first-rate delineations of missionary enterprise and endurance, and in others by creating respect for missions and missionaries

in minds hitherto strange to that feeling. In various editions very many thousands of the book were sold during the thirty-eight years in which it was in steady circulation.

The success of his book led to the suggestion that he might easily find much useful employment for his pen. He did contribute some papers to the *Sunday at Home, Pall Mall Gazette,* and other publications. But in this, as in all other enterprises, loyalty to the great work of his life ruled him. He soon came to the conviction that he ought not to take time from the work of winning souls, and spend it in writing papers and books-and from the moment of that decision he put mere literary work resolutely aside.

"I feel keenly," he wrote in 1884, on his return to Peking, "that there is here more than I can do, and writing must go to the wall." And as late in his life as 1890 he added, "I could have made, and could now

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make, I believe, money by writing, but I do not write. I settle down to teach illiterate Chinamen and Mongols, heal their sores, and present Christ to them."

Towards the end of 1882 James Gilmour entered upon' a long series of meetings on behalf of the London Missionary Society, consisting of sermons and addresses to Sunday-school children on the Sunday, and speeches at public meetings during the week. A long series of his letters written to his wife between November 1882 and March 1883 is still extant, and they form an impressive record of the work willingly undertaken by a wearied missionary at home in search of rest and change. He visited Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, Liverpool, Kilsyth, Hamilton, Paisley, Dundee, St Andrews, Arbroath, Lytham, Aberdeen, Montrose, Manchester, Hingham, Cambridge, Norfolk, and Southampton. And this list exhausts only a portion of his excursions on the effort to stimulate and develop the faith and the zeal of the churches at home. His wanderings brought him into contact sometimes with relatives, sometimes with old college friends, now grave pastors fast hastening towards middle life. The meetings he attended always added to the circle of his friends, for none could hear his ringing voice, and feel the clasp of his hand, and pass under the influence of his ardent enthusiasm on behalf of the great enterprise of the modern Christian Church, without receiving an impression never likely to be effaced.

He in turn experienced a strong and abiding spiritual refreshment from this renewal, after twelve years' absence, of touch and fellowship with

the Christian life of Great Britain. His earnestness deepened, he studied with

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intensest interest movements like the Salvation Army, then coming into great prominence, and other agencies for improving the religious life of the nation, and he rejoiced in all fellowship with other disciples of the Lord Jesus which had for its aim the strengthening of the life of faith.

He rejoiced greatly when at infrequent intervals a Sunday came upon which he was entirely free from engagements. Such rare occasions he utilised very fully for spiritual edification. He was somewhat hampered in his possibilities on these days by the fact that his temporary home was at Bexley Heath, and his strong Sabbatarian views never permitted him to travel by rail or omnibus on the Lord's Day. The following letter shows how he passed one of these days.

> "Yesterday being a fine day I left home at 7.15 a.m., walked to London (twelve miles), got to Spurgeon's at 10.30. Had a permit from a seat-holder, was close to the platform, heard a good earnest sermon, was introduced to Spurgeon in the vestry after service, went home to one of his deacons for dinner, there met an American who had under Mr Moody been converted from drunkenness to God, and whose craving for drink was as instantaneously and as thoroughly expelled as the devils by Christ of old. After dinner visited Spurgeon's Stockwell Orphanages, then walked to Camberwell and dropped in, in passing, at the Catholic Apostolic Church and heard a sermon from a man who would have described himself as an Apostle, I suppose, and who ridiculed in a gentle and mild way the idea that all men were to be partakers of thc Gospel blessings which he seemed to think were the special property of what he called 'The Church'; walked on to

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> Lewisham, heard Morlais Jones: and then walked home in the moonlight, arriving here footsore and weary about 10.20 p.m. I enjoyed the day very much, all but the last four or five miles home at night. I am thankful to find myself so strong. I had a warm bath and slept like a top."

Those who were privileged to entertain James Gilmour, if congenial, and the old friends who were fortunate enough to secure him for even a brief period, often experienced his power of vivid and entrancing narration. His twelve years of service had been very full of varied and uncommon experience, and when in the vein he could make the hours pass almost as minutes. "During this furlough," writes Dr Reynolds, "I had several opportunities of intercourse with him, and listened to several

of his addresses on the progress and need of missionary enterprise in the north of China and Mongolia, and was profoundly impressed by his earnestness, but I was more deeply moved when in quiet *tête-à-tête* he unveiled some of his special experiences. I should like to mention one. He once had great hope of the conversion to God of a Mongol who had given him his entire confidence, and who was suffering from cataract in both eyes. Gilmour felt that this was a case in which surgical help might restore the sufferer to at least partial sight, and he made arrangements that in the escort of a Mongol the patient should find his way to the medical institution at Peking. He started on the pilgrimage when Gilmour, with his brave young wife, were encamped in a great temporary settlement of Mongols, who were in a state of considerable fanatical excitement against the new faith and its foreign teacher. Gilmour said, 'We prayed

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night and day for the success of this experiment, and we arranged to cover all expenses connected with the arrangement.' Alas! wind laden with dust, and blinding heat and other apparent accidents conspired against the poor sufferer, and when the necessary time had elapsed after the operation and the bandages were removed, the patient was found to be *stone blind.* The Mongol companion stirred up the poor fellow's suspicion by telling him that he knew why the Missionary had sent him to Peking. 'I saw,' said he,, the jewel of your eye in a bottle on the shelf. These Christians can get hundreds of taels for these jewels which they take out of our eyes.'

"When the blind man was brought back to Gilmour, his companion spread his suspicious and exasperating story in the entire district, and the fanatical hatred was augmented into seething and murderous passion, and our dear friends were in imminent peril for several weeks. If they had ventured to escape, it would have been a confession of a vile conspiracy with the Peking doctors, and a signal for their massacre. They remained to live down the ominous and odious charge, and in continuous effort to justify the simplicity of their motives and the purity and beneficence of their mission.

"Deeply moved, as I was, by the story of this hairbreadth escape, I asked Mrs Gilmour more about those fearful weeks of suspense, and she assured me that they had been perfectly calm, and that they were entirely resigned to God's will, whatever it might be.

"Many other trials of faith and patience were described by Gilmour, without one touch of self-approval or self-admiration, and the only trouble that haunted him

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was that the results of his long journeys and of his various missionary enterprises had been apparently so few."

The month of June and part of July was spent at Millport, a watering-place on the west coast of Scotland, near the lovely scenery of Arran. On July 4 he ascended Goatfell, and in so doing had an adventure which might have had very serious consequences. He started late, lost his way, but finally reached the summit at 8.45 p.m., and then, as he notes in his diary: "Fog came on nearly at once with rain and thunder. Sat in the lee of a dripping rock on a wet stone and looked at a couple of acres of fog and granite boulders. Very dark and cold about midnight, the time wore on very slowly, more rain dripping, and fog. At 2 o'clock a.m. I began the descent, and in a short while it was light enough to see. Came on all right, and saw where I had missed the way … I have not caught cold. I was wet all night, but kept wrapt up in my plaid and as warm as I could manage. Next day the minister congratulated me on being seen alive after my Goatfell adventure."

On September I the return voyage to China began, and Peking was reached on November 14.

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CHAPTER VIII

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

In Peking the old familiar round of mission duties recommenced. Gilmour, after his absence of eighteen months, was the same man, and yet not the same. He yearned for fruit in the conversion of souls, and he began to devote himself with more eager self-denial than ever to the winning of Chinamen's hearts for the Saviour. The winter of 1883–1884 was spent in Peking, and his diary is full of incidents illustrative of the time and effort he gave to dealing with individuals.

In February, 1884, he made one of the most remarkable of his Mongolian journeys. He visited the Plain, travelling on foot, and thus subjecting himself to risks and hardships of a very serious order. But he had good reasons for his method, and he sets them forth with his usual clearness. Possibly no other journey of his life more strikingly testifies to his strict sense of duty, the unsparing way in which he spent himself in its discharge, and his eager desire to win souls.

"On this occasion, partly owing to the shortness of the time at my disposal, which made it hardly worth while to set up an establishment, and partly owing to the peculiar

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season of the year, which would have made it difficult to find pasture for travelling cattle, I determined to go on foot, without medicines, in a strictly spiritual capacity, and not seeking so much to make fresh acquaintances or open up new ground as to revisit familiar localities and see how far former evangelistic attempts had produced any effect. In addition there were some individual Mongols who have been taught a good deal about Christianity, and on whom I wished once more, while there was still opportunity, to press the claims of Christ.

"Five cold days in a mule litter brought me to Kalgan, and another day in a cart took me up over the pass and landed me in a Chinese inn on the Mongolian plain. This inn has no separate rooms; the guests all share the ample platform of the kitchen, and sleep on straw mats laid over the brickwork, which is heated by flues leading from fires on which their meals are cooked. The Chinese innkeeper was an old friend of mine, and he permitted me to share his room with him. From this, as a centre, I was able to make expeditions to four Mongolian settlements.

"My first visit was made to a lama whom I have known for years, and who has been instructed in Christianity by others, both before and since I made his acquaintance. He is a man of influence, wealth, and leisure, and, though a priest, has a wife and child. I spent almost a whole day with him, and hardly know what to think about him. He seems to admit that there must be a God of the universe, and admits that Christ may be a revelation of Him, but in the same sense in which Buddha was. From one part of his conversation I was almost led to believe that he had been praying to Jesus, but I could get him to make no such admission. I fear that the inquiring spirit of former years has given place to a spirit of indifference. He has everything he wants, he has little or no care, seemingly; he is content to let things drift,

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and keeps his mind easy. If he were only waked up he might do much for his countrymen.

"My second visit was to a temple and cluster of tents where I found some old acquaintances; was politely received, but nothing more.

"My third visit was to another cluster of tents, where I was at once hailed as the doctor, and, *nolens volens,* compelled to examine and prescribe for a number of diseases. Some cures accomplished years before explained the enthusiasm of the friends there, but for spiritual results I looked in vain.

"My next expedition was to a place some miles—say eight—away. Some years ago, in stormy weather, Mrs Gilmour and I, soaked out of our tent; had found shelter in the mud-house of a Mongol, who refused to take anything for the use of his building, remarking that we would be going and coming that way afterwards, and that then we might give him a present of some foreign article or other. I had sent him a few things, but had never since personally visited him, and when I reached the settlement I was grieved to find that the old man was dead. His son, a lad of twenty-three, had succeeded to his estate and his small official dignity and emoluments, and received me in a most remarkably friendly way. He was just starting from home, but on seeing me gave up all idea of his going away, and, insisting on my staying in his tent for the night, spent the remainder of the day with me.

"Next day, slinging on one side a postman's brown bag containing my kit and provisions; on the other an angler's waterproof bag, with books, etc.; and carrying from a stick over my shoulder a Chinaman's sheepskin coat, I left my landlord drinking the two ounces of hot Chinese whisky which formed the invariable introduction to his breakfast, turned my face northwards, and started for a twenty-three miles' walk to the settlement which, for some

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summers in succession, has furnished me with men and oxen for my annual journeys. Now the Mongols are familiar with the Russians, who, as tea-agents, reside in Kalgan; they have seen many passing foreign travellers on horses, camels, and in carts; they have seen missionary journeys performed on donkeys and ox-carts; but I think that that' morning for the first time had they seen a foreigner, with all his belongings hung about him, tramping the country after the manner of their own begging lamas. There were few people to meet on the road, but those I did meet asked the customary questions in tones of great surprise, received my answers with evident incredulity, and, for the most part, rode away muttering to themselves, *You eldib eem,* which may be translated to mean, 'Strange affair.' My feet, through want of practice, I suppose, soon showed symptoms of thinking this style of travelling as strange as the Mongols did, and were badly blistered long before the journey was over.

"An occasional rest and a bite of snow varied the painful monotony of the few last long miles; the river was reached at last, and, crossing it, I was soon in front of the cluster of huts I had come to visit, and on looking up I was agreeably astonished to find that the first man to come out to meet me was the mandarin of the district. He was soon joined by others, and, rescued from the dogs, I was escorted to his tent, seated before the fire, and supplied with a cup and full teapot. I had intended to drink tea in his tent

only for form's sake; but his tea was good, the snow seemed only to have increased my thirst, the man himself was sincerely friendly; under the circumstances my stoicism broke down, and the mandarin's teapot was soon all but empty. Meanwhile, his tent had been filling with friends and neighbours, to whom the news of my arrival had spread, and in a little while I had round me a representative from nearly every family in the village.

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Among the others came my two servants—the priest and the layman who had driven my ox-carts for me. Escorted by these I went to another tent, rested there awhile, and then moved into a mud-built house. The priest I had come to visit was busy lighting a fire which would do nothing but smoke, and the room was soon full. Finding him alone, I told him that I had come to speak to him and my other friends about the salvation of their souls, and was pressing him to accept Christ, when a layman I also knew entered. Without waiting for me to say anything, the priest related the drift of our conversation to the layman, who, tongs in hand, was trying to make the fire blaze. Blaze it would not, but sent forth an increasing volume of smoke, and the layman, invisible to me in the dense cloud, though only about two yards away, spoke up and said that for months he had been a scholar of Jesus, and that if the priest would join him they would become Christians together. Whether the priest would join him or not, his mind was made up, he would trust the Saviour. By this time the cloud had settled down lower still. I was lying flat on the platform, and the two men were crouching on the floor—I could just see dimly the bottom of their skin coats—but the place was beautiful to me as the gate of heaven, and the words of the confession of Christ from out the cloud of smoke were inspiriting to me as if they had been spoken by an angel from out of a cloud of glory.

"But neighbours came in, duty called the blackman (layman) away, the evening meal had to be prepared and eaten, and it was not till late at night that I had opportunity for a private talk with him who had confessed Christ; and even then it was not private, because we were within earshot of a family of people in their beds.

"Of all the countries I have visited Mongolia is the most sparsely peopled, and yet it is, of all the places I have

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seen, the most difficult to get private conversation with anyone. Everybody, even half-grown children, seems to think he has a perfect right to intrude on any and all conversation. Bar the door and deny admittance, and, you would be suspected of hatching a plot. Take a man away for a stroll that you may talk to him in quiet, and you would be suspected of some dangerous enchantment. Remembering that one must always have some definite message or business to perform when he travels, and hoping to be able to do something with this same blackman, I had purposely left, in the Chinese inn, some presents which I could not well carry with me, and after a day's

rest the blackman and I started to bring them. That gave us twenty-three miles' private conversation, and a good answer to give to all who demanded, 'Where are you going?' 'What to do?' He gave me the history of the origin and growth of his belief in Christ. I taught him much he did not know, and at a lonely place we sat down and lifted our voices to heaven in prayer. It was the pleasantest walk I ever had in Mongolia, and at the same time the most painful. My feet broke down altogether. It was evident I could not walk back again the next day, so, acting on my follower's advice, by a great effort I walked into the inn as if my feet were all right; we bargained for a cart, and, the Chinaman not suspecting the state of my feet, we got it at a reasonable rate. Mongols and Chinese joined in explaining to me how much time and labour I would have saved if! had hired a cart at first, taken everything with me, and not returned to the inn at all. From their point of view they were right; but the blackman and I looked at the thing from a different standpoint. We had accomplished our purpose, and felt that we could afford to let our neighbours plume themselves on their supposed superior wisdom.

"Another day's rest at this place gave me what I much

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wanted—an opportunity for a long quiet talk with the mandarin of this small tribe. I was especially anxious to explain to him the true nature of Christianity, because the Mongol who professes Christianity lives under his jurisdiction, and I felt sure that a right understanding of the case might be of service in protecting the professor from troubles that are likely to come to him through men misunderstanding his case. The mandarin came. On my last visit I had been the means of curing him of a troublesome complaint over which he had spent much time and money; in addition, I had brought him a present from England. He was perfectly friendly and exceedingly attentive, and at the close of the conversation asked some questions which I thought evinced that he had somewhat entered into the spirit of the conversation. He is a man of few words, but from what he said I hope that he feels something of the truth of Christianity.

"My next expedition was to a mandarin of wealth and rank, whose encampment occupies a commanding site on a mountain-side overlooking a large lake. I found him at home, and, as he knows well the main doctrines of Christianity, my main mission to him at this time was to try and rouse him to earnestness of thought and action in regard to his personal relation to Christ. We spent great part of the afternoon in earnest talking, and I was much pleased with the manner in which he, from time to time, explained to another mandarin, who was there as guest, doctrines and facts which were alluded to in our conversation. Next morning he started on a journey connected with the business of his office, and I returned to my friendly quarters where I had left my belongings.

"I felt it laid upon me to visit two lamas at a temple some seventy miles from where I was, and started next day. I reached the temple in three days, and found that both the lamas I had come to see were dead. So, as far

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as they were concerned, I was too late. Both on the road, however, and at the temple itself, I had good opportunities for preaching and teaching. I met some interesting men, and not only in tents where I was entertained as guest, but sometimes out in the open desert, stray travellers would meet me, dismount from their horses, and give me occasion for Christian conversation. Five days completed this round, and after another day's rest I started back for Kalgan, escorted for ten miles by him who had professed Qhrist. We walked slowly, as we had much to say. Arrived at the parting place, we sat down and prayed together. I then left, and the last I saw of the poor fellow, there he was, sitting in the same place still. I reached Kalgan without adventure, and returned to Peking on March 21, having been away just over a month."

Possibly the most touching comment upon this extraordinary journey is to give some of the brief entries which refer to it in the diary.

"*February* 19, 1884.—Started in a litter for Mongolia.

Good talk in inn with innman."

"*February* 23.—Went to Mr Williams. My letter had not reached them. No one knew I was coming."

"*February* 25.—Over the Pass to Barosaij."

"*February* 26.—Spent the day with Tu Gishuae.

Urged on him the internal proof of Christianity—the change of heart."

"*February* 28.—Shabberti. Boyinto Jauggé has desire to become scholar of Jesus."

"*March* 1.—Walked here. Feet terribly bad. Snow on the road. Great thirst. Badma Darag met me, Tea in his tent. Boyinto's confession in the smoke of the *baishin*."[1]

1 Fire in the centre of the tent.

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"*March* 2.—Sabbath. Quiet day. Much talk with all. The Lord opened my lips."

"*March* 3.—Walked to Barosaij with Boyinto to bring my presents. Talk about Christianity. Prayer in the desert. Feet terribly bad, oh, such pain in walking."

"*March* 4.—Carted back."

"*March* 7.—Hara Oss. Walked back here. Called on Tu Lobsung. Talk. He knew the way to heaven, but said, 'Tell it to some of the younger ones.' 'You go first,' I replied. 'You most need to know.' "

"*March* 8.—Terrible feet. Got to Chagan Hauran."

"*March* 14.—Boyinto accompanied me to Chagan Balgas with his pony. Saw him sitting as long as I was in sight. Feet bad."

"*March* 21.—Left Pei Kuan at 4 am. Dark and snow. Terrible march over slippery stones. Nan Kou at 7 a.m. No donkey on such a snowy day. Hired the next twenty-seven li. Stiff march. Shatto at 11.35. Terrible march to Ching Ho at 3 p.m. Terrible march to Tê Sheng Mên. Home at 6.10. Prayer Meeting. Thanks be unto God for all His mercies."

Early in 1885 Mr Gilmour's heart was rejoiced by the tidings of the baptism of Boyinto, the Mongol to whom reference has been repeatedly made above. Although Gilmour's was not the hand to administer the rite, undoubtedly the conversion was the result of his work. On January 26, 1885, he received a letter from the Rev. W. P. Sprague, of the American Mission at Kalgan, part of which we quote.

KALGAN, *January* 14, 1885.

"DEAR BROTHER GILMOUR,—I hasten to tell you the very good news. Boyinto of Shabberti was baptized by my hand this day into the Church of Christ, here at

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Kalgan, in the presence of our assembled church and congregation. I'm sure you will rejoice and thank God more than any of us. And I never saw our Christians so happy to receive anyone into the Church. The only thing I regret is that it should not be your hand instead of mine to administer the sacred rite.

"I wrote you of his visit to us a month ago, and his application to join the Church here, and our satisfaction with his appearance. He turned up again yesterday morning, and spent all day with us. In the afternoon we had, by previous appointment, a union meeting of upper and lower city congregations, as a continuation of week of prayer meeting, because the interest was so great. Mr Roberts preached, and in the after part of meeting, when two or three others had risen for prayers, I asked Boyinto if he wanted to ask Christians to pray for him, and he arose and expressed his desires, including wanting to be baptized very plainly. We called church meeting at close of the service, and proceeded to examine him for admission to Church. He answered so well as to please everyone, making some happy hits, as when asked what sort of a place heaven was, replied, 'I haven't been there—how can I tell?' Then said,, Would anyone pray to go there if it

were not a good place?' But his straightforward, open simplicity was refreshing. There seemed no reason for thinking he was other than an honest believer—seeking to follow Jesus in all things. The native church members first responded with enthusiasm that he was a most fit candidate for receiving to the Church, and expressed great delight at finding a Mongol who loved and trusted our Saviour. So we felt with Peter, 'Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized?' The others then asked me to baptize him on the morrow, when we were to have another union meeting at our place. And could you have seen his rising and answering my questions,

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give assent to creed and covenant, and then see him 'remove his cap, and bow his head reverently and receive the water of baptism, your heart would overflow with gratitude and praise to God for this first fruit from Mongolia. After prayer we sang 'From Greenland's icy mountains,' changed to 'From Mongolia, etc.,' and we felt it as never before.

"Though God has thus given us great pleasure in gathering this first fruit, still I feel, and we all feel, that the honour of the work belongs to God, and the reward to you and others."

During 1884 and 1885 the regular work of the Peking mission occupied almost the whole of his time, the Rev. S. E. Meech being in England on furlough, and most of his duties therefore falling upon Mr Gilmour. During his stay in England he had attended many of the Salvation Army meetings, and had caught much of their spirit. He had also come to the conviction that men needed to be dealt with individually rather than in the mass. Hence he gave much time to conversation, to teaching single persons the Christian catechism and the New Testament, and endeavouring, by talking and praying with them, to lead them to a knowledge of the truth. From six in the morning until ten at night he was at the service of all comers. In the afternoon he attended one or both of the Peking chapels, preaching if there were the opportunity, but always eagerly on the alert for any individuals showing signs of interest in the Gospel. It had been the custom of the missionaries to reserve the Sunday evening for an English service, devoted to their own spiritual refreshment. This, which was held in the mission compound, he ceased to attend, even although his absence sometimes

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made it impossible to hold the service, in order that he might find time to read and talk and pray with his Chinese servants. Frequently the meal-time would find him thus engaged, but the meal had to wait until his visitor had left, or until the interview came to its natural close. He

ceased to read all newspapers except those distinctively Christian. He found no time for books, as he felt that direct work for the Chinese should fill the hours he might otherwise devote to reading. He became more wholly than ever the man of one book—the Bible—and so absorbed did he grow in this close dealing with souls that in the earlier stages of his wife's illness he felt constrained to place it before even her wish that he would remain by her at periods of severe suffering and weakness.

> "*December* 9, 1883.—At chapel met Wang from a place 300 li away down in the country. He had heard a sermon there two or three years before which he remembered, and could quote. I began the service, and brought him up here to my study. We were talking when another man, Jui, came in from 130 li north of Peking. He had to run away from home on account of misconduct. These two kept me till dark."

In a letter to the Rev. S. E. Meech, dated November 9, 1885, Mr Gilmour refers to a number of these individual cases in which he has been interesting himself, and the way in which he has dealt with them. It illustrates his method of close and careful dealing with each native.

> "Ch'ang attends Sunday and Friday services. My opinion about Ch'ang is that he wants mission employ. He has no expectation of that from me, and little from

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> Rees. I think, too, that he does not mean to break with Christianity or with us, and I faintly hope that his experiences with us will do us good, though they have been most painful to us. I think you'll find him much more tractable than he would have been had he not been through these troubles with us.
>
> "Hsing has had the devil putting philosophic doubt into him. I have pressed him to pelt the devil with Scripture, as our Master did.
>
> "Li, shoemaker, I *do* like. He cannot stay to Sunday service. I take him before service therefore.
>
> "Fu does well. Last Friday he remained after prayer-meeting, and talked till 9.40 about all manner of things secular and sacred. He has most pleasant remembrances of Emily—Emily, too, liked him.
>
> "Jui Wu, the powder magazine man, is in a more hopeful case. He may come all right yet.[1]
>
> "Old Tai nearly went, but will now, I think, remain till you come. He wants to tiffin with me on Sundays, and enjoys much four, five, or six small cups of good strong tea with milk and sugar. He is growing in grace.

"Young Tai I am detaining after his father goes and reading with him and teaching him. He gives up his trade for the day, and I want to give him a good day.

"Chao Erh attends well and is improved in circumstances.

"Lu Ssu˘ is in his old trade, and doing well. He comes on Sundays when he comes. He was the man I hoped least of, and as yet he pleases me almost most.

"Lama comes tomorrow to finish reconstructing Mongol catechism. I may go on a two months' journey to Mongolia, starting in December. I'll have to see the children to Tientsin in February, and want to meet you.

1 Fu became an: evangelist, and Jui Wu a dispenser, in the Chi Chou Mission.

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"Hstis as they were. [1]

"I am very much encouraged and thankful about the little Church. I can honestly say that I have tried to do my best for it during your absence, and God has encouraged me a good deal in it. I have reaped some that you have sown, and have endeavoured to sow something for you to reap when you return.

"I sometimes have deep fits of the blues when I think of the children, but their mother was able to trust Jesus with them, and why should not I?

"The Mongol work, too, has entered on a new phase, and that opens up a new future for me. It is a formidable affair. I don't think I'll go to Kalgan or that region. I fear no doctor would stay with me there. I may go away North-east. I can hardly tell yet. Meantime, with God's help, I hope to do another month's work in Peking, and then hand the thing over to Rees once for all. Most of my books I'll sell. What use are they to me? I never have time to read them, and am not likely ever to have."

The letter just quoted was written after the sad event to which we must now refer. Towards the close of the summer of 1885 Mr Gilmour awoke to the fact that one of the heaviest sorrows of his life was coming upon him. For some years past Mrs Gilmour had been subject to severe attacks of pain. The visit to England and the rest and change of the old home life had in a measure restored her. But hardly were they comfortably established in their old Peking quarters ere some of her most trying symptoms reappeared. With that brave heart and resolute spirit characteristic of her whole missionary career, for a time she gave herself to the duties of the

1 Father and son; the only native preachers in the West City of Peking at that time.

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mission and bore her full share of its anxieties and toils. But gradually she was constrained to recognise that her active work was over. From the first she had thrown herself wholeheartedly into missionary service. She could converse fluently with the Mongols, having acquired their language in the same way as her husband, by enduring repeatedly all the privations of life in a Mongol tent. She had impressed them by her fondness for animals, by her gentleness of spirit, and by her evident interest in all that bore upon their own welfare. In Peking she had laboured hard among the women and girls, both in the matter of education and also of direct religious instruction. A very bitter element in her cup of sorrow was the conviction gradually forced upon her that her power to do this work was fast slipping away. In a letter to her sister, Mrs Meech, then in England, dated May 2, 1885, she gives the first clear expression to this feeling: "I would have written before, but I have been ill for about six weeks; not actually ill, except one week, but not able to do anything except the children's lessons and the harmonium on Sundays sometimes. All the rest has had to go. I am sorry, but it can't be helped. How long it will last I don't know. I can't get stronger, so I must be content to be tired. I am nothing more than weak, and a great many people are that. There has been a grand revival here. It seemed to pass like a mountain torrent, while I had only to look on and see. My only wonder was that people had lived so long without the happiness that they might have had for the taking. I didn't want to go to the meeting, I felt so weak and unable to bear the tension of spiritual excitement. But as it was it didn't

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tire me at all, but made me love a lot of the people. May the Chinese feel the flood tide of new life that has come into Peking! And they must, there can be nothing to hinder it."

The reference in the last part of this letter is' to a great deepening of spiritual life that took place among the missionaries, and also among some of the European residents in Peking.

The first explicit reference by Mr Gilmour to his coming sorrow occurs in the Diary; but in his report, sent home a month later, and dated August 4, 1885, he wrote: "Mrs Gilmour is very ill, and now very weak. I fear all hope of her recovery is taken away. Her trouble is a rundown, but the serious complication is her lungs. We are at the hills in a temple

with another family, the Childs. Mrs Child came out in the same ship with Mrs Gilmour, when, as Miss Prankard, she came first to China. Mrs Child renders invaluable service to the sick one."

In the Diary the following entries show the course of sorrowful events:

"*July* 4, 1885.—It really dawns upon me today in such a way that I can feel it that my wife is likely to die, and I too feel something of how desolate it would be for me with my motherless children sent away from me. Eh, man!"

"*August* 22.—Emily spoke of being sometimes *so* happy. She is quite aware now she cannot recover."

"*September* 13, Sunday, Peking.—Emily saw all the women. She felt very weak Today. Remarked at 7 p.m.: 'Well, Jamie, I am going, I suppose. I'll soon see you there. It won't be long.' I said she would not want me much there. She said fondly she would. 'I

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think I'll sit at the gate and look for you coming.' Said she has been out for the last time. Asked me not to go to chapel, but went."

"*September* 17.—Today, in the morning, I promised Emily that I would remain home from the chapel and give her a holiday. She was *so* pleased. We had a most enjoyable afternoon. She was so happy. She sat up for an hour or so, and we conversed about all things, the use of the beautiful in creation, etc."

All the next day Mrs Gilmour slowly sank, and soon after the midnight of September 18 passed peacefully within "the gate." The story of the closing scene was thus told by her husband:

"PEKING: Saturday, September 19, 1885.

"MY DEAR MEECH,—Emily crossed the river last night, or this morning rather at 12.15.

"I was called in from the Friday evening prayer meeting just as it was concluding, and found her with laboured breath and fixed eyes. For a time we thought it was all to end at once. After a time she got over it.

"10 p.m. was a repetition of 8 p.m.'s experience.

"At 12 midnight she was labouring much in her breath, coughed a very little cough, and all at once the rapidity of her breath nearly doubled, suddenly her hand fell over powerless, her eyes became fixed, there was some difficult breathing, and with Mrs Henderson on the one side of the bed, which had been moved when we came from the hills into the sitting-room, she departed.

"During these four hours she spoke little; once or twice she called for milk, but for the most part contented herself with assenting or dissenting to and from my remarks and suggestions by moving the head.

"At 10.30, seeing me sleepy and desiring to sleep herself,

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she asked me to go and lie down, but I said I would not do so while she was so ill.

"I asked her if she felt all safe in the hands of Jesus.

She nodded her assent.

"Some month or six weeks ago we two had talked about everything to be done in case of her death, the children, etc., and not only then, but more than once we had talked over spiritual things, because we feared that when the end came she might not be able to speak. I am glad we did so. During these four hours she was either in such great distress, or, when free from distress, was so tired and eager to sleep, that talking was hardly possible.

"The 'Rest' she so longed for she has now got.

"I treasure what she said one day when she had been, I think, reading her wall text, '*To me to live is Christ, to die is gain,*' when I asked her if *she* felt it so. She said she did, and often would remark that to go would be far better for her, but she was so eager to get well for my sake and that of the children. For herself, too, she was more and more enchanted with the beauty God had put in the world. On Friday I went in, she waved her hand and said, 'What beauty!' It was some flowers on the table. A bunch of grapes, a beauty, filled her mouth with praise to God for all His goodness to her. The post waits. Funeral Monday.—Yours in sorrow,

"J. GILMOUR."

Mrs Gilmour was buried on September 21. Her faith was clear and strong. Uncommon as their courtship had been, the subsequent married life was very happy. She was the equal of her husband in missionary zeal and enthusiasm, and he himself bears testimony to the unerring skill which she possessed in gauging the moral qualities of the Chinese. She gave much time and labour

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to Christian work among the women and girls in Peking; and her husband was greatly helped in his work during the nearly eleven years of married life by her sound judgment, her strong affection, her loving Christian character, and her entire consecration to the Lord Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER IX

A CHANGE OF FIELD

DURING 1885 James Gilmour gradually reached the conclusion that a change of field was desirable. He was aware that friends and colleagues more or less qualified to form an opinion had urged upon him the advisability of labouring in Eastern Mongolia among the agricultural Mongols. No one knew so well as himself the advantages and the disadvantages of this plan. The reasons that finally led him to a decision were noble and characteristic. It was a hard field, and no one else could or would go. The Mongols of the Plain were to some extent benefited by the American Mission at Kalgan; those dwelling in Eastern Mongolia were without a helper. Considerations like these, as he tells us, decided his new course of action.

"In these circumstances my mind has turned away north-east from Peking, where people are not so scarce, and where the Mongols live as farmers. I have been to that region twice. I knew some people who came from that region. As soon as Mr Rees returns from Chi Chou I hope to go again. A doctor might be induced to settle somewhere there, and though it would be hard a bit, a family might live there too, which I don't think would be possible on the plain beyond Kalgan.

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"I am fully aware of the difficulties. They are:

"1. I have no proper Chinaman to take with me.

More than half the population is Chinese, and I could not: do well without a Chinaman.

"2. It is a new district and will take time to work up.

"3. It is not easily reached from Peking or anywhere else, and will be a very isolated part.

"4. It is rather a rough and unsafe district.

"I know all these, but feel, in reliance on God, like facing the thing as the best and proper thing to do. There are inns all about, and though for some time a private location may not be secured, we can still go about among the people. My main hope, though, is in settling down somewhere as a head centre, in close contact with the people, so that I earnestly desire that the doctor should come. If he is unmarried I would be glad to see him

tomorrow. Could you not get a doctor who would be willing to remain single till a location could be secured? After a location has been secured let him marry if he likes.

"I think that the region I have in my mind would make a good centre for a doctor, and that he would have plenty of practice among Mongols and Chinese, especially if he could start a hospital for in-patients.

"I am very glad that the Mongolian region around Kalgan has shown signs of bearing fruit. It has strengthened my faith much. I am also glad that God has acknowledged in some degree my work here in Peking, and I feel more hopeful than ever I did. God, too, has cut me adrift from all my fixings, so that I feel quite ready to go anywhere if only He goes with me."

Mr Gilmour entered upon this new departure on the understanding that a medical colleague should be sent to him at the earliest possible moment. This responsibility the London Board assumed and endeavoured to discharge.

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The result was a severe trial to the faith, not only of the solitary worker but to all interested—and they were many—in the fate of the new mission. As we shall see later on, when a congenial and competent medical colleague reached him, and was entering with vigour and hope upon the work, Dr Mackenzie of Tientsin suddenly died, and before the immediate and urgent claims of Tientsin the claims of Mongolia had to give way. But in estimating the success of both missions, that on the Plain, and that in Eastern Mongolia, it must never be forgotten that what Gilmour considered *essential,* the presence and help of a medical colleague, was never in the Providence of God granted to him for any length of time. In the account he gives of his first visit to the region as its missionary—he had been twice before on visits of inspection—he dwells upon this necessity.

"I left Peking December 14, 1885, and re-entered Peking February 16, 1886, so that my absence from here was just two months. The part of Mongolia I went to is situated 800 Ii, or say 270 English miles, north-east by east of Peking, and, at the usual rate of 90 li (or 30 miles) a day, is nine days distant. This is not the part of Mongolia near Kalgan. Kalgan is north-north-west of Peking, five days' journey.

"Whilst I was considering my plans a Mongol appeared in Peking who was willing to take me to his home, and I went with him, hoping thus to get introduced to a district of country, an introduction being both necessary and helpful. Ta Cheng Tzu is the name of the place where, through his introduction, I was located from December 23, 1885, to February 9, 1886. I had a room in an inn. I spent some days at the home of my Mongol

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friend and made two journeys to other places, but Ta Chêng Tzu˘ was my headquarters. It is a small market town, with a daily fair. The surrounding neighbourhood is peopled with Mongols and Chinese in about equal proportions. The Mongols are mostly lords of the soil, and style the Chinese slaves, that is in the country. The real trade of the whole locality is in the hands of the Chinese. The Mongols all speak Chinese, and the town resident Mongols have, many of them, forgotten Mongolian, and laugh at themselves as not being able to speak their own language.

"The country is like Wales in this respect, that, though Mongolian is the native language, the coming language and the language that is affected and sought after, is Chinese. Well-to-do Mongols have Chinese teachers for their children, and read Chinese well. During my stay there I sold more Chinese than Mongolian books, and talked more Chinese than Mongolian, though my intercourse was largely with Mongols.

"Opium is largely grown there, so is tobacco, and large quantities of whisky are manufactured and consumed. It was partly a famine year. At a little distance from Ta Chêng Tzu˘ the harvest had failed, and I think the line of preaching that seemed to impress the hearers most was one that reasoned with them about the growth, manufacture, and use of these three, being so contrary to Heaven's design in giving land and rain to grow food, that it was not to be wondered at if, seeing how the land and rain were perverted, God should send short rations. Evil speaking, vile language, made a fourth subject which naturally came in for notice, and on all these four subjects I scarcely ever spoke without gaining the nearly universal concurrence of my little audiences.

"The great theme, however, was Christ, and I think that most men in that little market town, and a great

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many of those who used to come to the fair, both heard and understood the great gospel truth of salvation in Jesus.

"Eager to see some more of the country, and in the hope that I might be able to talk to him on the way, I hired a Mongol to carry my bedding and books, and made a descent on a village thirty miles away. The general cold of the winter was aggravated by a snowstorm which overtook us at the little market town, and I have no words to tell you how the cold felt that day as I paraded that one street. I sold a fair number of books, though my hands were too much benumbed almost to be able to hand the books out. I made some attempts at preaching, but the muscles were also benumbed—that day *was* a *cold* day.

"I was turned out of two respectable inns at Bull Town because I was a foot traveller, had no cart or animal, that is, and had to put up in a tramps' tavern because I came as a tramp!

"Next journey I made I hired a man and a *donkey*. The donkey was my passport to respectability, and I was more comfortable too, being able to take more bedding with me. I was warned against going to Ch'ao Yang, Sixty miles, the roads being represented as unsafe; but I went and found no trouble, though there was a severe famine in the district. I spent a day each at two market towns on the way, and two days in Ch'ao Yang itself.

"The journey home I made on foot, a donkey driven by a Mongol carrying my bedding and books. I adopted this plan mainly to bring myself into close contact with the Mongol. He proved himself a capital fellow to travel with, but as yet has shown no signs of belief in Christ. As we did long marches my feet suffered badly."

In a private letter written at this time he enters a little more fully into what he had to endure.

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"I had a good time in Mongolia, but oh! so cold. Some of the days I spent in the markets were so very cold that my muscles seemed benumbed, and speech even was difficult. I met with some spiritual response, though, and with that I can stand cold. Eh! man, I have got thin. I am feeding up at present. I left my medicines, books, etc., there, and walked home here, a donkey carrying my baggage, a distance of about three hundred miles, in seven and a half days, or about forty miles a day, and my feet were really very bad.

"At night I used to draw a woollen thread through the blisters. In the morning I 'hirpled' a little, but it was soon all right. I walked, not because I had not money to ride, but to get at the Mongol who was with me."

These graphic pictures enable us to realise how Mr Gilmour began the last great missionary enterprise of his life. He returned to Peking, and then had to pass through that severe trial which comes to almost all missionaries in the foreign field, which is often one of their heaviest crosses. His two eldest boys were sent home for education. They sailed from Tientsin, March 23, 1886, the diary for that day containing the brief but significant reference: "At 6.45 a.m. came all the friends once more, at 7.30 cast off, and the vessel slowly fell out into the middle of the river. Oh! the parting!" But at 8.30 on the same morning the sorrowful father had started on his solitary return journey to Peking. Bereft now of both wife and boys he was to pass the rest of his career in China, except for the brief intervals of residence in Peking, in the cheerless,

noisy, uncongenial quarters of an ordinary Chinese inn. The return of the Rev. S. E. Meech in

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April 1886 set him entirely free from mission work in the capital. He had already acquired the needful experience of his new field of labour, and on April 22, 1886, he started anew for Eastern Mongolia. It is neither necessary nor desirable to enter into any very detailed description of the next three years. In many respects day after day was occupied with the round of ever-recurring and similar duties, but it is desirable to enter, if we can, with some minuteness into his inner life, and to lay bare the spiritual sources and springs of his outward actions. It is in these, in our judgment, that the true beauty, the abiding lesson, and the great success of his life consist. And this he has enabled us to do. In a private, not an official, letter to the Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson, the Foreign Secretary of the London Missionary Society, he indicates his actions and the motives that were impelling him so to act, during the summer of 1886. Differences of opinion arose with his fellow missionaries as to the wisdom of his methods and the soundness of his judgment. Those who differed most strongly from him knew little or nothing by personal observation and experience of the conditions of work either on the Plain or at Ch'ao Yang. But no question ever did or ever could arise as to the absolute consecration of his heart and life to the work of winning souls. The truth of the words in one of his official reports was manifest to all: "Man, the fire of God is upon me to go and preach."

> "The past four and a half months has been a time of no small trial and spiritual tension. Since April 22 I have had no tidings of the outer world. An agent of the Bible Society, who was selling books in the district, was with me

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> for a month, but he had gone out before me, so that when we met he had no news for me, but wanted news from me.
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> "Some men, who gave promise of believing in Jesus, have fallen away, and I have a haunting suspicion that it was one such man who, on the morning of Sunday, June 6, stole my beautiful copy of the revised Bible, leaving me till now with only a New Testament in English. I had much difficulty in procuring that Bible, and wasn't it heartless of a Chinaman to steal it for the leather binding, for which even he could have hardly any use? I said not a single word to anyone in the town about it, as I feared that making trouble over it would hinder me in future, by making innkeepers afraid to receive me, lest they should be held responsible for such losses. I

can hardly say though, that, at first at least, I took joyfully the spoiling of my goods. Secret tears testified to my sense of the loss, but falling back on the faith that all things work together for my good, I was comforted, and gave the more earnest heed to the New Testament.

"Then the Chinese would ask, 'How many people have believed and entered the religion since you left Peking?' and such questions kept before my mind painfully how slowly things move, and drew out my soul in more painful longing for God's blessing in the conversion of men.

"In the beginning of July I must have got a touch of the sun. Nearly all that month I was ill, but just then was the great annual fair at Ch'ao Yang, so, ill and all, I had the tent put up daily and dispensed medicines. My assistant, however, had to do most of the preaching; I had not much strength for that. The first three weeks in August I had diarrhœa and dysentery. I was at Ta Chêng Tzu˘. There was no fair, and but poor market gatherings, but, weather permitting, we put up our tent daily and did good work. Paul says (Gal. iv. 19), ' My

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little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you,' and he is right. It is a carrying of men in prayer until the image of Christ is formed in them; and how many of them prove abortions!

"One of the converts at Ta Chêng Tzu˘ caused me no little anxiety. I knew that he professed to be impressed last winter. He said he wanted to call on me in my inn and tell me his difficulties. I was eager to get home, but as he said he would have no leisure before a certain date, I waited till then, nearly a week, for almost no other purpose than to see him. He never came, and I trudged back to Peking downcast about him.

"This year when we came to Ta Chêng Tzu˘ on our way to Ch'ao Yang, on going to his place for breakfast (he is one of two brothers who own and manage a restaurant, and both of them, and a third brother, are members of a sect which forbids opium, whisky, and tobacco), we were shown into the more private part, and he and his brother and the cook set upon us to inquire more fully about Christianity, how to enter it, etc. etc. This took me by surprise, and made me so glad that my breakfast for the most part remained uneaten, though we had travelled eight hours that morning. In the evening I did not go for a meal, and my assistant on going was met at the door by the inquirers, and so engaged in conversation about Christianity that darkness set in, the cooking range was closed, and the establishment shut for the day before they were finished. My man had no dinner. Next day we went on towards Ch'ao Yang thankful and happy. These restaurant people had a few days before been visited by the Bible Society's agent, and had derived much Christian benefit from his Chinese assistant.

"Our interview with the restaurant men was on Monday. In Ch'ao Yang next Sunday, just six days after being, so to speak, on the mount of transfiguration with

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these Chinamen, on dismissing the few hangers-on that remained at the close of the afternoon preaching, and stepping down from the little vantage-ground from which I had been speaking, one of the audience said he would go home with me to my inn, as he had come with a letter to me from Ta Chêng Tzu˘ from the Bible agent. I went to the inn, read the letter, and found that he and his Chinese helper had differed, and he had come to Ta Chêng Tzu˘ seeking me. He needed and asked my help, so next day I started for Ta Chêng Tzu˘, and on arriving there found that the little place was full of the news of the quarrel between the Christian foreigner and the Christian native. That was bad, but, worse still, on going to the restaurant I found the earnestness of the inquirers gone, and one of them said openly, 'If this is the sort of fruit that Christianity bears, what better is it than any other religion?'

"In a later visit paid in May they seemed colder still, and the place where I had hoped to gather fruit seemed barren and hopeless.

"In August we again visited Ta Chêng Tzu˘. I was blue. The fever of July, the defection of the Mongol donkey man, who failed to come for us, the diarrhœa, which on the journey changed to dysentery, being baffled in attempting to find suitable quarters in Ta Chêng Tzu˘, and the chilled hearts of the restaurant men, made our entrance not cheerful. On the way my assistant and I had talked over matters, and resolved by prayer and endeavour to see what could be done for the restaurant men. Just ten days after our arrival the eldest brother called on me in my inn and said, 'Tonight I dismiss my gods, henceforth I am a Christian. I am ready to be baptized any day you may be pleased to name.'

"I cannot say what a relief these words brought me. There still remained anxieties in his case, but in a day or

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two things came out all right, and day by day in public in the restaurant he might be seen studying his catechism when unemployed, and speaking for Christianity to all who asked what book that was.

"He is a leading spirit, though a poor scholar, and was the deacon or head of the branch of the sect in Ta Chêng Tzu˘, called Tsai li ti. There are some twelve or sixteen members. Most of them joined the sect through his endeavours, and he is eager to rear up Christianity in the same way. You will partly understand now how anxious I am about him. If he goes on all right, we may soon have a little company of believers there. If he falls away—well; all things work together for my good.

"One thing that moved these restaurant men towards Christianity was an incident which happened in their establishment last winter. A half-drunk Chinaman reviled me badly one evening at dinner. He laid to my charge many bad and grievous things. Though they were utterly false as regards me, they might be quite true of some other foreigner whom he may have met. It was useless to reason with a drunken man over a case of mistaken identity, so I said nothing, ate my dinner, paid my bill, and went to my inn. The restaurant men were very wroth with the man, they told me afterwards, and felt like 'going for' him themselves, and never forgot what they were pleased to call my patience. In God's providence this little incident seems to have been an important factor in impressing them with favourable ideas of Christianity.

"Another thing which seems to have impressed them was their seeing me this August, day by day at my post in my tent, carrying on the work, when they knew I was ill, and, according to their ideas, should have been in bed. I was not really so ill as all that, but that was their idea. I would be very glad to have another reviling and

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another attack of dysentery if the same results would follow.

" The profession of the other adherent at Ta Chêng Tzu˘, and the moving of the hearts, seemingly at least, of other two men who live at a distance, and had to leave for home suddenly before receiving full instruction, but of whom I try to have hope, have all moved my heart and seem answers to a great longing I had been crying to God about, namely, that He would give me power to move these heathen. Oh that He would do it!

"I have felt it my duty to become a vegetarian on trial. I don't know whether I can carry it out. The Chinese look up so much to this supposed asceticism that I am eager to acquire the influence a successful vegetarianism would give me, and I am trying it in true Chinese style, which forbids eggs, leeks, and carrots, etc. As far as I have gone all is well. I am a little afraid that the great appetite it gives may drive me to eat till I become fat. We'll see.

"The mothers bringing their babies moves me much. It reminds me of scenes in Peking when another and more skilful hand ministered to their diseases; then the picture of the family surroundings fills itself up, and I have to seek a place where to weep.

"Altogether it is a sowing in tears. The district is not an easy one, the life which the work entails is a hard one. There is no hardship or self-denial I am not ready to 'go in for,' but I want you to understand me and let me have your sympathy."

This long extract, not too long we venture to think, as enabling us to see into the heart of the man, raises several points of great moment.

Nothing could illustrate better his eagerness to get into close touch and perfect sympathy with the people. He had long before adopted the native

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dress of an ordinary shopkeeper or respectable workman. He now adapted himself, as far as possible, to the native food. He lived on such as the poor eat. Often he would take his bowl of porridge, native fashion, in the street, sitting down upon a low stool by the boiler of the itinerant restaurant keeper. The vegetarianism referred to was, as he indicates, very thoroughgoing and in accord with Chinese ideas.

The great poverty of the people also pressed upon his attention the enormous waste induced by whisky drinking, and by the smoking of tobacco and opium. The sect Tsai li ti referred to was a small organisation among the Chinese for endeavouring to secure entire abstinence from all three. It did not seem tolerable to him that the level of Christian morality and practice with regard to these things should be lower than that of the heathen. Famine often visited those parts, and he came to hold the view that men could hardly pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," with any hope of a favourable answer, or even reasonably expect God's blessing upon their tillage of the soil, while they continued to use a large part of the grain produced in the manufacture of strong drink, and while they continued to set apart large districts for the cultivation of tobacco and opium. Hence, at first, he made entire abstinence from all three an indispensable requisite for admission into the Christian Church.

It was hardly to be expected, perhaps, that his colleagues in the North China Mission would be able to see eye to eye with him on these points. With regard to opium the opinion as to abstinence is unanimous. With regard to the other two, the prevailing opinion was that,

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however desirable entire abstinence may be, it is not authoritatively commanded, and ought not to be made an indispensable qualification for baptism.

It seemed to some of them that there was danger of the heathen confusing Christianity with their own Tsai lit ti. In reply to such a suggestion, Gilmour wrote: "My hearers not know the difference between Tsai li ti and Christianity! Thanks be to God, this whole town and neighbourhood has rung with the truths of Christianity. Children, men, shop-boys, and, of all people in the world, a lad gathering grain stumps

in the fields a long way off—it has been my lot to hear them repeat sayings of mine, when they saw me, and did not think I could hear them."

His brethren also were opposed to the ascetic mode of life he adopted, and the extreme of hardship which he so often and so willingly encountered in his work. But he himself often said, and there are many references in his diary to the same effect, that the kind of life he was living in the interior was quite as healthy, and quite as conducive to longevity, as the ordinary and certainly much more comfortable life of a missionary at Peking. While it may be true that the exposure and sufferings of twenty years had so weakened him as to leave him powerless when seized by the last illness, yet the labours of twenty such years spent in the service of God and the service of man are surely the seeds from which there shall yet spring a rich harvest to the glory of God and to the blessing of the dark and degraded Mongols and Chinese.

By the close of 1886 three main centres of work had been selected in the new district—Ta Chêng Tzu˘, Tâ Ssu˘ Kou, and Ch'ao Yang-all three being towns of some

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importance. Mr Gilmour used to spend a month or so in each town, visiting also the neighbourhood, especially those places where fairs were held, and where consequently the people came together in large numbers. He had a tent which he used to put up in a main thoroughfare, and there he stood from early morn until night healing the sick, selling Christian books, talking with inquirers, preaching at every opportunity the full and free Gospel of salvation.

Mr Gilmour returned to Peking on December 13, 1886, having been away nearly eight months. The tabulated results of this missionary campaign were:

Patients seen (about) 5,717
Hearers preached to 23,755
Books sold 3,067
Tracts distributed 4,500
Miles travelled 1,860
Money spent 120·92 taels = (about) £30 to £40.

He adds, "And out of all this there are only two men who have openly confessed Christ. In one sense it is a small result; in another sense there is much to be grateful for. I have to part with my assistant, and am uncertain about whom to take in his place. My travelling arrangements

have broken down, and I am perplexed in more ways than I have patience to write about; but

> Where He may lead I'll follow,
> In Him my trust repose,
> And every hour in perfect peace
> I'll sing, 'He knows, He knows.'"

On March 24, 1888, James Gilmour was rejoiced by the seeming fulfilment of his heart's most eager desire—

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the arrival at Tâ Ssu˘ Kou of a fully qualified medical colleague, Dr Roberts. We have seen how repeated had been his entreaties, how earnest his yearnings after this essential factor in the success of his mission. For a month he enjoyed to the full the uplifting of congenial fellowship and of skilled help. Then came a blow, harder almost to endure than the previous solitude.

"Two days ago," he writes under date of April 21, 1888, "a man pushed himself in among the crowd round my table as I was dispensing medicines in the market-place here, and announced himself as a courier from Tientsin. When asked what his news was, he was silent, so I led him away towards my inn. On the way I again asked what his news was. He groaned. I began to get alarmed, and noticed that he carried with him a sword, covered merely with a cloth scabbard. This looked warlike, and I wondered if there could have been another massacre at Tientsin. Coming to a quiet place in the street I *demanded* his news, when he replied, '*Dr Mackenzie is dead, after a week's illness*.' At the inn we got out our letters from the bundle, and found the news true. In. a little Dr Roberts looked up from a letter he was reading and said he was appointed to the vacancy. *Then* the full extent of my loss flashed upon me. Mackenzie dead—Roberts to go to Tientsin! One of my closest friends dead—my colleague removed!

> "Forty-eight hours have elapsed, and I am just coming right again. I have been like a ship suddenly struck in mid-ocean by a mountain sea breaking over it. You know in that case a ship staggers a bit, and takes some time to shake clear and right herself.
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> "As to Mackenzie. His friendship I very keenly appreciated. The week of prayer in January 1887 we

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spent together in Peking. The week of prayer in January 1888 we spent together in Tientsin. These were seasons of great enjoyment. On parting we spoke of having a week together again in April 1888. That is not to be. The full extent of the loss will take some time to realise.

"The prospect of Dr Roberts settling permanently here in the autumn gave light and brightness to the outlook. My faith is not gone, but it would be untrue to say that I am not walking in the dark. I shall do my best to hold on here single-handed; but I earnestly hope that I am not to be alone much longer. Something must be done. There is a limit to all human endurance.

"Amid many storms we are holding on our way, and making progress among the Chinese. Of the Mongols I have nothing cheering to report. They come around and daily hear the Gospel; but, as yet at least, there it ends. I look into their faces to see whom the Lord is going to call, but have not seen him yet apparently. Meantime, I am getting deeper and deeper into Chinese work and connections, and sometimes the thought crosses my mind that my knowledge of Mongolian is not employed to its best advantage here. On the other hand, I see more Mongols here than I could see anywhere on the Plain."

God's ways of dealing with His work and the workers are often very dim and obscure to finite understanding. Humanly speaking, no man in China could less easily be spared than Dr Mackenzie; no man in all that vast empire more needed the joy of fellowship than he to whom it had just been granted. But the indomitable spirit shines clearly through the words of Gilmour: "It would be untrue to say that I am not walking in the dark. I shall do my best to hold on here single-handed." Seeing God's hand, as he did, in these sorrowful events, and

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believing that Dr Roberts also was following the path of God's will, he turned again to his lonely tasks. But it was at a heavy cost. His health was giving way faster than he realised. The views of his brethren at Peking, that he would break down under the strain of the isolation, were to some extent justified. The home authorities did what they could, but nearly a year elapsed before Dr Smith, who was appointed to succeed Dr Roberts, reached Mongolia, and when he did so his first duty he felt was to order Mr Gilmour to visit England for rest and change. But meanwhile he went bravely on. Like his Master, "he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself," and when "he was reviled, he reviled not again."

"We left Ch'ao Yang," he writes under date of September 3, 1888, " August 10, attended markets, got much rained in, and reached Ta Cheng Tzu August 20. There I found that one of the Christians had possessed himself of my bank book and drawn about fifteen taels of my money which I had banked' at the grocer's. The delinquent turned up next day, walked in, and hung up his whip as if nothing had happened. At the moment I was dining, and he sat down beside me. I asked him quietly why he had treated me so. He said I might be easy in mind; he had money and cattle he would pay me. 'Go then, and bring me the money; till you do so, don't come to me again.' Off he went. Days passed and nothing was done to repair the mischief. Meantime, the scandal was the talk of the small town, and the scornful things said were so keen that Liu, my assistant, got quite wild. He was indignant that I did not go to law with the man, who all the while was swelling about on a donkey

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bought with the money he stole from me, and using the most defiant and abusive language towards me (not to my face, happily). The roughs of the place began to be insolent, and a drunken man came and made a scene in our quarters. Liu redoubled his attack on me, and even threatened to go home to Shantung if I would do nothing but pray—a course of action on my part which irritated him much. Li San, the head Christian there, joined him in saying I ought to make a show of power. I asked the two to read at their leisure Matt. v. 6, 7. Liu warned me that I was in personal danger. The man was panic struck and highly nervous. I arranged an expedition to a place some go Ii away, but got rained in and could not go. Finally, the offender sent an embassy desiring peace, and, the day before we left, a respectable deputation of mutual friends, Christian and heathen, found its way one by one to my room, coming thus not to attract attention, and last of all came the thief. According to pre-arrangement I asked him, as he entered, what he had come for. He walked up to the wall, knelt down, and confessed his sin in prayer to God. The end of the matter is, he gives me one donkey and the promise of another, is suspended as to membership for twelve months, and is forbidden the chapel for three months.

"I am not bright about Ta Chéêng Tzu˘, as you may suppose. Worse than the stealing case is that of the head man, Li San, who says that he was promised employment before he became a Christian! The ten days we passed there we were the song of the drunkard and the jest of the abjects; but the peace of God *passes all understanding,* and that kept my heart and mind. We put a calm front on; put out our stand daily and carried ourselves as if nothing had happened.

"The great thought in my mind these days, and the great object of my life, is to be like Christ. As He was in

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the world, so are we to be. He was in the world to manifest God; we are in the world to manifest Christ. Is that not so? Iniquities, I must confess, prevail against me; but as contamination of sins flows to us from Adam, does not regenerating power flow into us from Christ? Is it not so?"

Meanwhile work was going steadily forward and some impression was being made. He made a flying visit to Tientsin and Peking in the autumn, but was soon back at his post. In his report of work for the year he is able to point to progress.

"1888 had been a tumultuous year. In December, at Ch'ao Yang, there was a sudden irruption of men and boys to learn the doctrine. Evening after evening we had from twenty to fifty people in our rooms to evening worship. We hardly knew how to account for it, but did all we could to teach as many as we could. The cold weather finally did much to stop the overcrowding, but there was good interest kept up among many till the end of the year.

"The baptisms for the year were, at Ta Chêng Tzu˘, two; Tá Ssu˘ Kou, two; Ch'ao Yang, eight; total, twelve adults, all Chinese.

"One man has been put out, so that the numbers stand as follows: Ta Cháng Tzu˘, four; Tá Ssu˘ Kou, three; Ch'ao Yang, nine; total, sixteen, all Chinese.

"Three adults, Chinese, were baptized ten days ago, and I hope to baptize two children next Sunday; but we have almost no promising adherents here at present. There are three entire families Christian, with Christian emblems on their door-posts; another family is Christian, but cannot fly the colours on the door-posts because the grandfather who has half the building is a heathen.

"In still another family, where only the husband is

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Christian, they have the Christian colours, but the family is heathen.

"My heart is set on reinforcements. Can they not be had? I had hoped Dr Smith would have spent the winter with me, but he did not. All the grace needed has been given me abundantly, but I don't think there should be any more solitary work. I don't think it pays in any sense.

"In addition, it is almost time I had a change. My eyes are bad. Doctors hesitate over my heart, say it is weak, and that its condition would affect seriously an application for life assurance. This winter I have gone in for a cough, which is not a good thing at all, and it would be well for the continuity of the work that there should be a young man on the field.

"Don't be alarmed, though, and don't alarm my friends. The above is for your own private information and guidance. I still regard myself as in first-rate health.

"I am not satisfied that we seem drifting away from the Mongols. At present, though lots of Mongols are around, our work is all but entirely Chinese. I am still of opinion that ou~ best way to reach them is from a Chinese basis. This may involve a matter of years ahead, and therefore it is that I am eager to see the future of the work provided for by being joined by a younger man or men.

"Meantime I am trying to follow very fully and very faithfully the lea dings and indications of God. I have had times of sore spiritual conflict and times of much spiritual rest, and my prayer is that you and the Board may in all your arrangements and plans for Mongolia be fully guided by Him. Oh that His full blessing would descend richly on this district!"

Dr Smith reached Mongolia in March 188g, and for the first time met his colleague. He has placed on record for use in this biography his account of that first meeting. On

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reaching Ch'ao Yang, Dr Smith found that Mr Gilmour was not there. "I followed the innkeeper," he writes, "to see the spot where my devoted colleague had spent so many lonely hours. We came to a little outhouse, with a kind of little court in front of it, not many yards wide. The outer door was locked by means of a padlock; but the innkeeper soon found an entrance by simply lifting the door off its wooden hinges, and then we were in the ante-room or rather kitchen … In it was a built-in cooking-pan, an earthenware bowl, and a wooden stick resembling a Scotch porridge-stick; and some brushwood which had been brought in to be in readiness when he next arrived at that inn. One of the two rooms, which lay on each side of this ante-room, was locked, and we could not open it, but through the chinks of the door I could see abundant traces of Gilmour. It was specially refreshing to see some genuine English on one of the boxes; it was 'Ferris, Bourne & Co., Bristol,' the people from whom he used to order his drugs. My servant and I decided to take up our quarters in the next room, which was evidently the servant's room. We soon managed to make ourselves very comfortable, and there was an unspeakable relief in at last being in a place which belonged to the London Mission, rented, of course. We had to spend the Sunday there. Mr Sun, the box-maker, soon came round, and seemed genuinely glad to see me, and offered to make all arrangements for the further stage

of our journey. We then discharged our carts, and I sent with them my letters for home.

"After spending the Sunday in company with the Christians there, we set out on the Monday morning with

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a local carter for Ta Chêng Tzu˘, a distance of about twenty-three miles. We crossed a hilly and sparsely populated district, reminding me of some of the bleaker scenery in Scotland. On reaching the town we at once drove to the new private mission premises. It was a little house surrounded by a straw fence. Quite a crowd of rough-looking people followed us in. One of the doors had been stolen, and altogether it looked so unprotected that I decided to take up my quarters in a little Mongol inn, where Mr Gilmour formerly lived. Next day I expected to meet Gilmour, and the two Christians there were fully expecting him. In the evening we had quite a levee; Li San and the other Christian, whom Gilmour used to call 'Long Legs,' sat drinking tea in my room for some time, and were very friendly; they were evidently trying to ingratiate themselves with me; I did not then know how disgracefully they had behaved to Gilmour, nor did I know the anxious business which was bringing Gilmour there at that time.

"Next day or the following, I forget exactly which, I was sitting in my room, when a young man arrived, my servant being out at the time. I could not make him out at first, not being able to understand what he said; but he had such an evident air about him that he had some kind of business with me that it at last dawned upon me that he must be Mr Gilmour's servant, and this was at once confirmed on the arrival of Lin Seng, my servant. He had been sent on ahead to announce Gilmour's arrival. It had been blowing a dust-storm all day, and on that account I hardly expected Gilmour, but now there was no doubt.

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"About four o'clock that afternoon Gilmour arrived, and I shall never forget that first meeting. I had pictured quite a different-looking man to myself. I saw a thin man of medium height, with a clean-shaven face, got up in Chinese dress, much the same as the respectable shopkeepers in that part of the country wear. On his head was a cap lined with cat's fur. I was struck by the kindly but determined look on his face. He greeted me most cordially, and I remember he said, 'I am glad to see you.' He looked worn out and ill. I at once gave him his letters.

"After arranging his things and seeing his men comfortably settled and getting over his first interview with the Christians there, he came up to my room in order to spend the night with me. We sat to all hours of the morning, chatting about things at home, and about his boys, whom I had seen before leaving Scotland.

"For the next day he arranged the dreaded interview with Li San down at the mission premises. Gilmour warned me that it would be a long-winded affair, and wished me not to expect his return for a good number of hours. After waiting a long time I went down to see how the interview was progressing. Li San and Gilmour were sitting on the kang, in tailor fashion on each side of a low table, and Li San was singing hymns; but there was a strange look upon his face, as if he did not altogether feel like singing. Gilmour said to me in English that they had not come to business yet, and Gilmour was determined that Li San was to say the first word, so Gilmour invited him to sing hymn after hymn, and then I left. The whole idea seemed to be to get money out of Gilmour, and when

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he found that impossible he threatened to come down to Tientsin to accuse Gilmour to his missionary colleagues, of having broken his promise to give him employment. Gilmour had no recollection of having done so; he said to me that possibly one of his previous assistants may have on his own responsibility led Li San to form that idea.

"Long Legs was also dogging Gilmour for money, and altogether they worried him; but he settled up everything. The premises were resold, and as Gilmour put it, 'it was the funeral of that little church.' They were threatening to prevent our leaving the town, as there seemed some doubt in Gilmour's mind as to whether we would be able to get a cart; these fears were disappointed; Li San got a cart for us."

Before Dr Smith had passed many days in the society of Mr Gilmour it became clear to the practised eye of the medical man that his colleague had been overstraining his health and strength. Notwithstanding his buoyancy and occasional high spirits all through his long years of work, James Gilmour had been subject to spells of severe depression. There are a very large number of brief entries in his diary to that effect. "Felt blue Today," is a frequent phrase, followed soon in the great majority of instances by words indicating a speedy recovery. Special events, that from time to time had a direct adverse influence upon his work, developed this state of mind rapidly and profoundly. The inevitable recall of Dr Roberts, already described, is a case in point, and the diary at that season contains entries like these:

"*April* 26, 1888.—These last days have been full of blessing and peace in my own soul. I have been able to

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leave things at Ta Chêng Tzu˘, and my colleagues all in God's hands."

"*May* 7.—Downcast day. No one to prayer."

"*May* 9.—In terrible darkness and tears for two days. Light broke over me at my stand today in the thought that Jesus was tempted forty days of the devil after His baptism, and that He felt forsaken on the cross."

"*May* 27, Sunday.—Service, Romans 12. Present, four Christians. Great depression."

The most constant force acting in the direction of mental depression was what appeared to him like the want of immediate success. He longed with an eager and almost painful intensity for signs that Gospel light had broken in upon the mental darkness of the men with whom he was in daily contact. He yearned for evidence that the love of Christ was winning the love of Chinese and Mongol hearts, as a mother yearns over her children. Hope deferred as to his medical colleague, ever recurring difficulties defeating all his efforts to secure suitable premises for his work, failure on the part of natives whom he had begun to trust, and all these things over and above the ceaseless strain of his daily toil, are more than sufficient to account for the state in which Dr Smith found him.

To those who knew him best, and who could appraise at their true value the toils and trials and disappointments of his daily lot, the wonder was not that he broke down; it was rather that physical collapse had not overtaken him sooner. There are many kinds of heroism, but it may be doubted whether any touches a higher level than that exhibited by this patient sower of the seed of life on the sterile field of Mongolia, bravely continuing to do so until

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imperatively urged to cease for a season, not by his consciousness off ailing power, but by the alarm and influence of his medical co-worker.

When the decision was once taken, it was acted upon promptly. March 26, 1889, was the day, and Peking the place. On April 4 he left Peking, and on the 20th he sailed from Shanghai. He arrived in London on May 25.

This visit to England in 1889 was a great refreshment, bodily, mental, and spiritual, to the overwrought labourer. The voyage itself, enforcing rest from all ordinary avocations, by removing Mr Gilmour from the depressing surroundings amid which he had spent so much of the last three years, began the restorative process. He was beginning to feel in himself great benefit from the change even by the time he reached London. But the six years which had passed since he last walked the

London streets had left their mark upon him. He had drawn to the utmost upon his physical and spiritual strength in the service of those for whose conversion he lived and toiled. He had been through the deep waters of personal affliction when his wife passed into the sinless life. The many toils and hardships of the passing years had drawn deep furrows upon the cheery face, and the eyes showed evidence of the mental and spiritual strain.

So sudden was the resolution to return, and so prompt his action upon it, that few knew even of the probability until he was actually here. On May 27, 1889, the writer was sitting in his room, overlooking the pleasant garden that brightens up the north-eastern corner of St Paul's Churchyard, in conversation with a gentleman, when a knock came at the door and a head appeared. Not seeing

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it very clearly, and at the same time asking for a minute's delay while the business in hand was completed, the head disappeared. As soon as the first visitor departed a man entered and stood near the door. I looked at him with the conviction that I knew him, and yet could not recall the true mental association, when the old smile broke over his face, and he burst into a laugh, saying, "Why, man, you don't know me." "Yes, I do," I replied, "you're Gilmour; but I thought that at this moment you were in Mongolia." But when I was able to scrutinise him closely I was shocked to see how very evident were the signs of stress and strain. It was not wholly inexcusable, even in an old friend, to fail to instantly recognise in the worn and apparently broken man, thought to be hard at work many thousands of miles away, the strong and cheery Gilmour of 1883.

Carrying him off home, we talked far into the night, not because his host thought it a good thing for the invalid, but because he was so full of his work and its difficulties and its pressing needs, and what he hoped to do on behalf of Mongolia by his visit home, that there seemed no possible alternative but to let him talk himself weary. And how splendidly he talked! He pictured his life at a Mongol inn. He ranged over the whole opium and whisky and tobacco controversy. He gave, with all the dramatic effect of which he was so great a master, the story of how he forced home upon the Chinese and Mongols, until even *they* admitted the force of the reasoning, how natural it was that famine should visit them when they gave up their land to opium, and their grain to the manufacture of whisky. He gave in rapid dialogue his

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own questions, the native rejoinders, and he so vividly pictured the scene that his hearer could fancy himself standing under the tent, surrounded by Chinese and Mongols, and assenting, as they did, to the earnest and far-reaching conclusions of the speaker.

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CHAPTER X

CLOSING LABOURS

JAMES GILMOUR remained in Great Britain less than eight months. The society of his boys was a great delight to him. He rejoiced in renewed intercourse with relatives and old friends. His religious convictions and his own spiritual life deepened still more. He went to a considerable number of meetings to speak on missionary work and needs, and he everywhere produced a great impression.

Referring to this visit, and especially to his intercourse with the boys, a near relative writes:

> "It was a time full of interest and pleasure. What a variety of moods, from the frolicsome to the pathetic, he displayed! But evidently his wife's death had laid hold upon his very soul, and there seemed so much more of sadness and tenderness than on his former visit, when he had enjoyed her bright companionship. On one occasion, referring to a medical missionary who had brought his wife home from China hopelessly ill, and who was expecting the end, he said: 'Eh, man, he little knows the *terrible* dark valley he has to come through, and if Christ is not with him he will be undone!' He spoke the words as though he were again going through his own agony, and

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> then added: 'But if Christ is with him he will come out of it with victory, and Christ will be dearer. But he has *no* idea what he has to face, though he thinks he has.'
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> "He had looked forward to spending part of his time with his sons at Millport, where he had spent June and July 1883 with his wife and boys on his former visit. So we went there for a month, and they had a good time boating, and walking, and reviving old memories of the happy home circle. The thought of reunion was always made prominent. The boys must ever remember his earnest efforts to lead their thoughts heavenward, and they do think of heaven as a very real place.

"He was always wonderfully considerate, and grateful for any attention. Sometimes, when he saw me unusually tired, he would go and get an extra pillow and make me rest on the sofa, or when we came to the table he would place me in a comfortable chair and pour out the tea himself, or he would say: 'Sister, take a cup yourself first, then you will be able to help us."

"On the day before he left us to return to China he really said his farewell. We had finished dinner, and when he went out he stood and looked in through the window at the happy faces still around the table. He threw a kiss, and then his feelings overcame him, his lip quivered, the tears came to his eyes, and he hastened away. Later in the day, when I was speaking hopefully of seeing him again, he answered: 'I shall see your face no more.'

"I know he felt very much giving up the comforts of civilised life, but he set his face to it. It touched me much the last evening he was with us, when, after I had to

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remind him two or three times of some business it was needful for him to attend to before he would go, he said: 'I can hardly drag myself away from this bright cosy scene.'

"His was a rarely sensitive soul. It pained him to hear anyone speaking evil of another. I have seen him turn deadly pale when he has heard anyone impute a wrong motive. He longed for more of the spirit of Christ among men. How he longed, too, for more workers in the Mission field! Many a time he would say, after a walk through Hamilton on a Saturday evening: 'Just think! In a little town like this there are men preaching at every other street corner, and I am alone in all of those hundreds of square miles in Mongolia! What you people are thinking of I cannot imagine!'"

His heart was in Mongolia. At the very earliest moment which the medical authorities and the Directors of the London Missionary Society would sanction he returned. He sailed for China on January 9, 1890, reached Peking on March 14, and on March 24 started again for Mongolia. He entered upon his last spell of work with a good heart and with high hopes. Dr Smith was to be his medical colleague. While in England Mr Gilmour had visited Cheshunt College, and had there fired the heart of Mr Parker with the desire and purpose of being his colleague. He was looking forward to his speedy arrival. During his absence in England Dr Smith had paid one brief visit to Mongolia by himself, and another, still briefer, in the company of the Rev. T. Bryson of Tientsin. Meanwhile the work had been going on slowly and steadily under the care of the native helper,

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Mr Liu, and of some of the converts. We now follow the story of this last year's work as it is told in Mr Gilmour's letters and reports. On May 9, 1890, he wrote to the Rev. R. Wardlaw Thompson:

"I have been all over the district, spending a month at Ch'ao Yang. There we were privileged to baptize four adults, one a woman, and one child, all Chinese. Two of these were young men who have been under instruction for eight or nine months, and are very pleasing cases indeed. The other two were a man and his wife, who is the first woman who has had courage to be baptized in this district. These last are an outcome of the medical work. They live in a small hamlet where the first beginning of an interest in Christianity took its rise from a man who came to me in the market-place with a bad sore in his leg, which had been caused by a wound from his own harvest sickle. The sore was cured, and friendly relations sprung up with the whole hamlet, and I am thankful to hear that, though only one family has put away its idols, all the neighbours are friendly.

"In Ch'ao Yang there are several inquirers. Some of the Christians give great satisfaction, others are not so satisfactory. One man, a Christian, tells me that his wife was possessed by an evil spirit, and to please her and cure her he had to allow the re-establishment of the worship of that spirit for her benefit. No sooner was this done than the woman was cured! Such things are firmly believed in by the Chinese.

"A most pleasing incident in our experience at Ch'ao Yang was a visit from a well-to-do farmer who lives some twenty li from the town. He has been friendly and an inquirer from the first. He has made no profession of Christianity, but says he reads his New Testament regularly,

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and prays. He has also taught two men in his neighbourhood. The one is a carpenter. The other is a farmer. They know the Catechism, observe the Sunday, and meet with Mr Feng for worship. Both of these men we saw, and their story seems true. Feng came and spent a day with us. I asked him why he did not make an open profession of Christianity. His reply was that he lives with his parents, as all Chinese do, and that he cannot arrange his house disregarding them, who with his wife and children are still heathen. He has been able only partially to do away with idols in his own house. Outside, too, of his own house heathen pressure is so great that, he says, were he to join Christianity it would be no use for him to live! He says he lacks the courage single-handed to meet all the persecution that would descend on him were he baptized. Meantime he is instructing those about him in the hope, apparently, that were there several together they could better stand the trouble. It is an interesting case, but not at all satisfactory. My hope about him is that, if he keeps conversant with the Word of God,

the Spirit may give him no rest till he has courage to take his stand and make his confession.

"We had a splendid month in the market-place. Chinese and Mongols in plenty, both to preach to and to heal. One Mongol betrayed a most intimate and full knowledge of, Christianity. The drought gave good opportunity of speaking of many things, and in most cases we had respectful attention. It was a *hard* month's work. Seven till noon or a little after was our market time; the afternoon private patients, the evening inquirers, makes a very long day, which begins at daylight and does not end till after the second watch of the night has been set. The Chinese usually secure a rest just after noon, but frequently just then some patient would turn up and put an end to quiet. In most cases the strain is relieved by

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holidays through rain and storm; but even this was wanting this time, so we had almost uninterrupted work.

"I am more than ever eager to have the medical work given over to a medical man. One day in Ch'ao Yang a man came swaggering across the open space in the marketplace. People pointed towards him and laughed. He was laughable, the ridiculous part of him being a straw hat which was an imitation, caricature rather, of a foreigner's hat. I could not help laughing. It was no laughing matter, though. He was a messenger from the cavalry camp just outside the town. He had come to take me to treat two soldiers who had received bullet-wounds in an encounter with Mongolian brigands. I had never seen a bullet-wound in my life, but I knew I could do more for the wounded men than any Chinese doctor; so I went. The wounds were then forty-eight hours old, and I dressed them as best I could, paying a daily visit for about a fortnight. Two wounds, though deep, were merely flesh; with these I had no difficulty. The third was a bone complication. I knew nothing of anatomy, had no books, absolutely nothing to consult; what could I do but pray? And the answer was startling. The third morning, when in the market-place attending to the ordinary patients, but a good deal preoccupied over the bone case, which I had determined should be finally dealt with that day if possible at all, there tottered up to me through the crowd a *live skeleton,* the outline of nearly every bone quite distinct, covered only with yellow skin, which hung about in loose folds. I think I see him yet—the chin as distinctly that of a skeleton as if it had bleached months on the plain. The man was about seventy, wore a pair of trousers, and had a loose garment thrown over his shoulders. He came for cough medicine, I think; if so, he got it; but I was soon engaged fingering and studying the bone I had to see to that afternoon. I was deeply

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thankful, but amidst all my gratitude the thing seemed so comical that I could not help smiling, and a keen young Chinaman in the crowd remarked, in an undertone, 'That smile means something.' So it did. It meant, among

other things, that I knew what to do with the wounded soldier's damaged bone; and in a short time his wound was in a fair way of healing. I was and am very thankful; but, after all, I am more impressed than ever with the fact that things are badly out of joint when there are lots of Christian doctors at home, and abroad too, and I, knowledgeless, am left to do the doctoring in a large district like this quite beyond the reach of medical help, not only for the natives but even for myself should I need it.

"A grim commentary on these wounds was the fact that in leaving Ch'ao Yang I was to pass through a brigand-infested district—so badly infested that travellers have abandoned the road. As saith the Scripture, 'The highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.' I had avoided this road twice, and was ashamed to avoid it again, so we went straight through it. We saw no one to harm us, but a week ago it was just as likely that I should Today have been lying on a Chinese kang, trying to dress my own wounds, as that I should have been sitting here writing to you.

"I am at present waiting for Dr Smith, whose last word to me, dated Tientsin, April 9, was that I should either see him or hear from him here between June 6 and 12.

"Yesterday, Sunday, June 8, had a pleasant day. The three Christians here have grown. Two of them have been through a good deal of trouble and stood it well. The farmer, who has been very ill, guessing we would be here, came in and spent the day with us. They seem very earnest."

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The beneficial result of the home visit of 1889 was very evident at this time. It had arrested the "running down," from which he had severely suffered. It had enabled him to renew old friendships, and to form new ones. His wholehearted devotion to the difficult work of his life and the wonderful intensity and depth of his faith had touched the hearts of many faithful men and women at home, who gladly responded to his oft-repeated request, "Pray for me and for the conversion of the Chinese and the Mongols." He renewed his interest in the broad current of the world's life. We have seen how some years previously he gave up all reading but the Bible. Now, while he studied the Bible with all his old eagerness, he had various newspapers sent to him, he rejoiced in the receipt of books sent by friends—especially those bearing upon the culture of the soul—and he kept his eye upon the religious and social movements of the day.

The selections from his correspondence which follow illustrate these changes in him. He modified his mode of life in Mongolia. Having given up vegetarianism on his homeward voyage he did not resume it upon his re-entrance on Mongol life. He remained a total abstainer, and his

hatred of opium, whisky, and tobacco continued as strong as ever, although he did not now make abstinence from the two latter a test of Church membership. He reserved more of the Sunday as a day of rest, taking only the religious services with the Christians and inquirers, and not, as formerly, setting up his tent on the street. The old careworn look disappeared, his form regained much of its former life and spring, and his face filled out, his smile resumed the brightness of old, and the voice came back to

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a good deal of its early clearness. All these evidences of a change for the better served to augur many years of happy work. In a letter to a friend he playfully alludes to the twenty or thirty years of labour yet remaining, and he often—half in jest and half in earnest—asserted that life in the interior was so healthy that he should probably outlive his fellow-workers at Tientsin and Peking.

To his brother-in-law, the Rev. S. E. Meech, he wrote:

"MONGOLIA, *July* 28, 1890.

"My DEAR MEECH,—Dr Smith came here July 2. The rains set in immediately on his arrival, and we *have* had it since. The spiritual rain has not come yet, nor are there any signs of it. When it does come may it come like the physical rain! Glad to see you have been having some. May you have much more! Make the valley full of ditches, brother, and then look out for the flood. Do you think we'll be able to go up to Him at last and say, 'We did our part, but you did not do yours, Lord?' Eh, man! Elijah called down fire with a short prayer, but his servant made six vain journeys to the summit only to return with the discouraging news—nothing. May the good Lord, who knows our frame and remembers we are dust, give us a little now and again, at any rate, if only to keep us going meantime! Eh, man! there will be no lack on His part. He'll shine up all right, not only to perform, but to succour His servants who trust in Him."

"*July* 28, 1890.

"My DEAR OWEN,—I know worry should be an unknown element in a believer's experience. I am eager to have done with it. I thank Him for much of its absence. But dissatisfaction with the present state of

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things is not worry, but legitimate soul-longing, and the death of that would be a bad thing.

"I can hardly tell how I am. Since Dr Smith came I have taken little note of inward things or outward either. It is very pleasant to have him here, and as the best sign of digestion is not to know one has a stomach or a

digestion, is the best sign of spiritual health not to know one has a soul at all? I wonder is this so? His presence has made a difference. Duty has kept me living quietly in good lodgings, with only such work as I can easily do without any over-rush, and the prospect of another month like it! I fear I am not such company to him as he is to me.

"We have had terrible rains; the rivers were not crossed for five or six days, and, even after that, two men were swept away on two separate days—four men, in all, from this one town alone.

"I know you pray for us here. Eh, man! if the thing would move, if the rain would come! '*As the eyes of servants,*' etc. (Psalms cxxiii., cxxvi.). I often read these Psalms together. And then I think what would please me best as a master would be to see my servant going ahead, energetically, and faithfully, and loyally with his work, not moping about downcast. Then is not this what God wants in us? So here goes cheerily and trustfully."

"*August* 10, 1890.

"I cannot say God gives me all the victories I want, but He keeps me in peace and faith, and that is not a little thing. My devotional reading lately has taken the form of the Chinese Psalms, and Schereschewsky's high Chinese notwithstanding (for which may he be forgiven), they are very refreshing and strong. How like are the heart-longings and soul-breathings of the old Judean hunted outlaw—brigand, if you like to call him so—to the heart

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and soul feelings of the educated Occidental of the nineteenth -century! Poor old Moses, another outlaw, what a battered old life he led, but what a grand soul, and how wonderfully he outlived it all, and was quite hale when called to die! How his people troubled him!—so like the Chinese. Fancy Moses going up the mountain to die alone. It is so nice to, have a later glimpse of him in the New Testament alongside of Elijah, who, too, was once under a cloud. God does not keep up things. 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.' Love to all.

"JAMES GILMOUR."

"CH'AO YANG, *August* 19, 1890.

"MY DEAR SONS,—I have just got here after a very hard journey of four days. It is summer and the rains are on; the roads are very bad.

"Our first adventure was in a deep, narrow gully going up a mountain. We met a cart coming down. There was no room to pass and no room to turn back. What were we to do? One of the carts had to be pulled up the bank. Neither would go up. Both carters sat and looked at each other. Our cart was heavy, the other cart was light. After looking at each other awhile

the other cart was pulled up and our carter helped him down again after we had passed.

" Our next adventure was in a river. The leading mule sank in a quicksand. The carter, shoes and all, jumped into the water; in a few seconds I had stripped all but a singlet and pants, and was in the river too. We got out after a little while.

"Next day we stuck in a quagmire. We hitched the mules to the tail of the cart, pulled it out, then dug a new road in the side of the ravine and got past.

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"The third day we upset our cart in a very muddy place early in the morning, and got caught in a thunder-shower in the afternoon. The fourth day we stuck in a mud-hole half a mile from the end of our journey, and when we got to our inn found our rooms in possession of a crowd of people doing a wedding.

"One thing made the journey very pleasant: it was this. Just as we were starting, one of the Christians, a Chinese farmer, but a man who is poor and dresses and eats very poorly, came and gave me two tiao, about 3s. 2d., to give to God. I was so glad to see him do it, and no doubt God was glad too. Then at the end of the journey, when we were stuck in the mud-hole and could not get out, up came one of the Christians, took off his stockings and shoes, went into the mud, and helped us out. The country was very beautiful all the way—just at its best."

In a letter to another correspondent he depicts what is involved in Chinese travelling during the wet season:

"The last thing we had to do was to make a journey of eighty miles. You would soon do that in England. Here, in August, it is no easy matter. It is just the time when, on account of the rains, no one should travel, and no one does travel who can help it. Carts would not go. I had to find my way home from a cart inn the night before we started along a newly rained-on muddy Chinese street in the dark. Next day I had much brightness shed on the journey by one of the Chinese Christians—a poor man with, oh, so poor a coat—giving a donation to print Christian books. It amounted to about $1.00 (one dollar) in all, but it meant a lot of self-denial to him; and as I passed, a little later, the drought-parched district where he lived, and looked at the poor fields, I wondered

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where he got the money. I suppose God gave him the heart to give it. Starting a journey with such a bit of light made it cheery.

"We travelled at those eighty miles four days, and rested one Sabbath, five days in all. Within three-quarters of a mile of the end of our journey

our cart stuck in a mud-hole. We had passed, shortly before, the cottage of a Christian, and, after we had been some half-hour or more in that hole, this Christian suddenly appeared on the scene. He is a great fellow for being neat and clean. In a few moments he was in the mud, ordering about the carter, shouting at the mules, and lifting at the stern of the cart. Even the mules felt there was some new factor added to the problem. They made a new effort and out the cart came. Would you credit it? A cart had been upset there some days before; it was said they had lost some thirty shillings in silver. The natives, hoping to find the money, literally dug up the highway and left a pit there. We did not know this, thought it was an ordinary pool, and drove straight into it. The Christian touch at the beginning of the journey, and the little Christian adventure at the end, made the journey and its remembrance quite pleasant.

"I am now reading Moule's *Veni Creator,* which came a few days ago. What helps me most just at present is the Psalms. I take a few verses every morning (almost), and learn off the Chinese translations of them. I never knew there was so much in the Psalms before. I believe that even at the end of a long life, this (discovery of more and more in God's Word) will hold true of all the Bible, and then for the beyond there is the Inexhaustible Himself—satisfaction for the present and plenty for the future.

"The endless sorrow and sufferings of this people here come home much to me. I see much of their bodily suffering, and in some feeble measure bear their sorrows

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and carry their griefs without being able to relieve them much. How dead and dark they are to things spiritual!"

Dr Smith, who spent some weeks with Mr Gilmour during this summer, has sent the following most interesting sketch of his daily life at this period. They were together for the most part at Tá Ssu˘ Kou.

"He always got up at daylight, folded up bedding, and then began reading. About six a man arrived, selling hot millet and bean porridge. He bought two bowls of this for early breakfast. He continued reading Chinese, generally aloud; and when he came to a difficult word he repeated it again and again, in order to impress it upon his memory. About eight he had breakfast, consisting of Chinese rolls and a cup of cocoa.

"At nine he went to the street with his tent, Mr Liu, the native preacher, accompanying him. One of the inn-servants assisted the latter in carrying tent and medicine boxes and in erecting same. The tent was erected in a broad street at the back of our inn, where a daily market was held. The medicine boxes were placed on a little table in front of which stood a wooden form and another at the side. The patients were seated on these. Any difficult cases were sent to the inn to be treated by me. On the table were also a number of copies of various tracts and portions of Scripture.

Mr Gilmour dispensed medicines, talked and preached as the opportunity offered.

"About one he returned to the inn, and had dinner, consisting of meat, etc., which was bought at a Chinese cookshop. About three we generally took a walk to the country. We used to go out to look at the various crops, and Mr Gilmour would chat away to one and another whom we met on the road. He was generally recognised, and in the most friendly way. I have a very pleasant

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recollection of these times; often our conversation would turn to home, to our boys and friends. Sometimes he would tell me about his student friends, while at other times he used to tell me of his deputation work at home, and about the various people he had met there.

"Often a gentleman would come up and ask, 'Where are you going?' to which Mr Gilmour would reply, 'We are cooling ourselves; we are going nowhere.' It was always a mystery to people what we could possibly mean by taking walks to the country. One day two lads followed us for some miles across some low hills, anxious to know our business, and getting well laughed at by their friends, poor fellows, on their return to the town.

"One thing about Mr Gilmour always impressed me deeply—his wonderful knowledge of the little touches of Chinese politeness, and his wonderful power of observation. He loved the Chinese—looked upon them and treated them as brothers, and was a man who lived much in prayer; and in this lay his great power as a missionary.

"When he met a Mongol he would exchange a few words of Mongol with him, and it was wonderful to see the man's face light up as he heard his own tongue. All the Mongols knew that he could speak their language, and as one of the few who did.

"As we returned to the town and were walking along the street, many of the passers-by would bow; and here and there a shopkeeper would give him a friendly bow. Sometimes he would buy a few peaches or apples, and not unfrequently he would give a sweetmeat vendor two cash for two sweets, handing one to me.

"About half-past four we returned to the inn, and then, as a rule, some people would be there waiting to see him. Mr Sun, the box-maker, used often to come to read the Scriptures with Mr Gilmour, and then they would discuss various points; Mr Sun giving his opinion, and

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then Mr Gilmour putting him right. Sometimes an outsider would drop in, and then, not unfrequently, Mr Sun would talk to him about the Gospel.

"About six Mr Gilmour had some cocoa and bread. At the time of the lighting of the candles Mr Gilmour had made it a rule for the Christians to assemble for evening prayers, and, accordingly, they all turned up then. A Chinese table was placed in the centre of Mr Gilmour's room, and three wooden forms were placed round the table for the accommodation of the preacher and the Christians. Mr Gilmour and I used to sit on chairs at the vacant side of the table. On the table stood two Chinese candlesticks, each surmounted by a Chinese candle. A Chinese candle is made from the castor bean, and is fixed to the candlestick by running the iron pin on the latter into a hollow straw in the end of the candle. Then we also had a Chinese oil lamp. The upper vessel is simply a little earthenware saucer, containing a little oil, and in it lie some threads of cotton (a cotton wick). This is made to project over the edge of the saucer and is then lighted. The lower part of the lamp is simply an earthenware receptacle, in which the oil for replenishing the lamp is kept, and, while in use, the little lamp is supported in it. This often used to remind me of the parable of the virgins, and in reading that parable by the light of such a lamp one is able to make it very realistic to Chinamen.

"Our evening worship consisted in first singing a hymn, Mr Gilmour leading. Then Mr Gilmour offered up a short prayer; after. which we read a chapter either in the Old or New Testament, reading verse about. Each man had a copy of the Scriptures. Then Mr Gilmour gave a little address on the chapter; after which we had another prayer-one of the Christians being asked this time. Then another hymn and the benediction.

"Usually one or more of the Christians would remain

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chatting with Mr Gilmour. As soon as they had gone we had a cup of cocoa together. Then Mr Gilmour and I used to have evening prayers together. He used to read a chapter from a little book by Mr Moule, and then we both prayed.

"After this we used to sit chatting together until bed-time, and so ended a day."

In August 1890 Dr Smith lost his wife, who as Miss Philip had become known and beloved by a large number of friends of the London Missionary Society, both in Great Britain and Australia. He had also become so ill that the ensuing weakness, together with the great shock of his wife's sudden death, compelled him, early in 1891, to return to England on a visit. Before doing so he was able to take Mr Parker, the young and active colleague appointed to assist Mr Gilmour, out to Mongolia, reaching Tá Ssu˘ Kou on December 5. Greatly encouraged by the arrival of his young helper, Mr Gilmour was grievously disappointed by the enforced return of Dr Smith, and the indefinite postponement of the

hospital scheme that was so near to his heart, and upon which he always asserted, in his judgment, the ultimate success of the mission depended. But discipline of this kind only drove him back more entirely upon God. In a letter to Mr Owen, dated December 29, 1890, he writes:

> About myself I have lots to be thankful for. I am mostly in the light, sometimes very sweetly. Sometimes, though, it is cold and dark; but I just hold on, and it is all right. Romans viii. I find good reading in dull spiritual weather, and the Psalms too are useful. When I feel I cannot make headway in devotion, I open at the

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Psalms and push out in my canoe, and let myself be carried along in the stream of devotion which flows through the whole book. The current always sets towards God, and in most places is strong and deep. These old men—eh, man! they beat us hollow, with all our New Testament and all our devotional aids and manuals. And yet I don't know. In the old time there were giants—one here and there. Now there are many nameless but efficient men of only ordinary stature.

"Brother, let us be faithful. That is what God wants. What He needs. What He can use. I was greatly struck by one saying of Mrs Booth's. It will not be so very different there (in heaven) to what it is here. I guess she is right. I guess there will be differences of occupation there as here, and I guess that our life here is a training for life and work there. Oh the mystery! How thin a wall divides it from us! How well the secret has been kept from of old till now! May the richest blessings be on you and yours and your work!—Yours affectionately,

"JAMES GILMOUR."

The year 1891 found Mr Gilmour hard at work as usual, in good health and spirits, and with the hope and apparently the prospect of many years of service before him. And yet, just as the summer was beginning, he was called to the presence of the King, and to the perfect work and fellowship of "the Church of the firstborn." Had he been able to choose his fate he would hardly have wished it other than it was. His work in Mongolia was steadily growing; slowly, it is true, but yet gaining a strength and impetus that will abide, and has well begun the conquest of Mongolia for Christ. Though practically without a medical colleague, and actually without the

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hospital for which he had so toiled and prayed, he was cheered and strengthened by the constant presence and fellowship of Mr Parker. His

letters are all in a cheery and buoyant strain, and, although referring not unfrequently to the future life, without a hint or a suspicion that he was in any degree conscious of the rapid way in which the days of his earthly life were running out. In a letter to Mr Thompson, dated January 7, he says, "You will be glad to hear I am in good health and spirits."

To Mr Owen he wrote on March 2:

> "Does God not mean to have a medical man here? I wonder! Wondering, I tell Him as I tell you, and try to leave it with Him, and in very great part *do* leave it to Him too. It is good to have His calm mercy and help. How's your soul, brother? I'll tell you how mine is eager to experience more of the Almighty power in working inside. Eager to be more transformed. Less conformed to the world. Eager to touch God more, and have Him touch me more, so that I can feel His touch.
>
> "I am distressed at so few conversions here. But again sometimes very fully satisfied in believing I am trying to do His will. That makes me calm. I am scared at our property venture, but again trust in God, and the fears subside. The world to come, too, sometimes looms up clear as not far distant, and the light that shines from that makes things seem different a good deal."

John Parker, a young missionary after Gilmour's own heart, who reached Mongolia on December 5, 1890, and retired in 1910, in his first report of his experiences in Mongolia gave a bright and, hopeful view of his colleague.

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> "On arriving at Tá Ssu˘ Kou we found Gilmour very well indeed; looking better than he did when I saw him in England. He was jubilant over our coming, and it has been a great source of happiness to me to know that God's sending me here has up till now given happiness and comfort to one of His faithful servants. I have had a slight taste of being left alone, and I must confess Gilmour has had something to endure during the last few years.
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> "We are living in hired rooms of an inn. Gilmour is not in this courtyard. I have been alone here with my Chinese boy for the last five weeks (Dr Smith being in Ch'ao Yang until a few days ago). I have been unable to get a proper teacher at present. Gilmour's student has been teaching me. He speaks distinctly. With him I have made very fair progress. I hope in a few days to secure a proper teacher.
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> "Another thing which has taught me a good amount of tl1e Chinese I know is having to give orders to my Chinese boy in housekeeping generally. I am thankful to God for past experiences in my life, though they were rather rough; for here I find they come in very usefully. I had to teach my boy how to cook and do things generally. It was rather an amusing piece of work, seeing that I knew nothing of the language. Each order I gave him was a comedy in two or three acts, all played out in dumb show. In telling

him what I wished purchased I was obliged to imitate sounds which are peculiar to certain beasts and birds, which when he understood, he announced that fact by opening wide his eyes and emitting a loud 'Ah!' which was generally followed by the name of the thing indicated bellowed forth at the top of his voice as if I were deaf. Also he in turn, when he had anything to tell me, always stood in the centre of the room and went through a whole performance. On one occasion, when he wished to tell me that a certain dog

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had stolen the day's meat, the performance was so amusing that, when he had got through, I asked him what he was trying to say, in order that I might once more see the fun.

"Forgive me for taking up your time with such frivolous things. But I have picked up much of the language in that way, although at the cost of being grimed with soot and burning my fingers. All that is now past, and the boy is very useful, and, although now a heathen, I am hoping that by my influence he may be led to know the love of Jesus Christ. I am very glad that I came straight out here. I am sure I shall learn the language (of the *people,* perhaps *not* of the *books)* better than in the frontier cities. I am constantly forced to try and speak. Every day I have some visitors here whom I must try and entertain. I feel stupid at times with them, and perhaps they think I am; but, nevertheless, each day's experience is adding to my vocabulary. And when so learnt, I know that people will understand me when I speak.

"Gilmour is doing a valuable work. Every day he goes to the street and sets out his table with his boxes of medicines and books. He has three narrow benches, on one of which he sits, the other two being for his patients. Of the latter he has any amount, coming with all the ills to which humanity is heir. It is a busy street, not of the best repute, for it is where all the traders in second-hand clothes and dealers in marine stores spread out their wares.

"From some weeks I went out at a certain hour to take care of Gilmour's stand while he went and got a 'refresher' in the shape of some indigestible pudding made of millet-flour with beans for plums. He generally left me with a patient or two requiring some lotion in the eye or some wound to dress. Then I, being a new-comer and a typical 'foreign devil' (being red of hair and in complexion), always brought a large following down the

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street with me, and attracted a great crowd round the stand. At first it was not pleasant to sit there and be stared at without being able to speak to them; but after a while I got very interested in the different faces that came round. On one occasion I noticed the crowd eagerly discussing something among, themselves, giving me a scrutinising look now and then. Now and again one would turn to his fellow and rub his finger across his upper lip

as if he was feeling for his moustache. I had only been here a week or so then, and knew very little of the language; but I listened attentively, and at last I heard them speaking the Chinese numerals, and then it all dawned upon me that they were inquiring about and discussing my age; so I up with my fingers indicating the years of my pilgrimage. I never saw a crowd so amused. 'Ah, ah!' they said, and opened their eyes, highly delighted that I was able to tell them what they wanted to know. Then I had my turn, and, pointing to a man here and there in the crowd, I used what little of Chinese I had in guessing their ages.

"But the sights of misery, suffering, and wretchedness which gather round Gilmour's stand are simply appalling. His work seems to me to come nearest to Christ's own way of blessing men. Healing them of their wounds, giving comfort in sickness, and at the same time telling them the gospel of Eternal Salvation through Jesus Christ. One day that I went I found Gilmour tying a bandage on a poor beggar's knee. The beggar was a boy about sixteen years of age, entirely naked, with the exception of a piece of sacking for a loin-cloth. He had been creeping about, almost frozen with cold, and a dog (who, no doubt, thought he was simply an animated bone) had attacked him.

"The people here are desperately poor and the misery and suffering one sees crawling through the streets every

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day is heart-rending. I have not a doubt that I am in a real mission field, and thank God that He has given me the opportunity to do something towards alleviating some of this misery. But what about the work as regards the saving of souls and establishing of a Church? I can only speak of the work in Tá Ssu Kouˇ. It is in its initiatory stage. All the Christians and adherents can sit round the four sides of my table. But I am highly pleased with them.

In April Mr Gilmour journeyed to Tientsin, and was unanimously elected to preside over the annual meeting of the North China District Committee of the London Missionary Society. His last communication to the home Society, with the exception of one brief note upon a matter of committee business, was a post card, dated April 20, 1891, received in London some weeks after the tidings of his death. It runs:

"Arrived here yesterday. The world keeps shrinking. Left Ta Ssii Kou Monday 8 a.m. Tuesday noon dined in a border Mongol village, in a Mongol's inn, served by a Mongol waiter, in presence of a number of Mongols. Got to London Missionary Society's Compound, Tientsin, Saturaay, 5 p.m. Our headquarters,are just five days from the extended railway. Am in AI health, everybody says so here, and that truly. Meantime am in clover, physically and spiritually. With prayers for the home end of the London Missionary Society's work.—Yours truly,

"J. GILMOUR."

Just thirty-one days later he was lying dead in the same compound. How the interval passed is told by those who enjoyed those closing days of lofty spiritual fellowship.

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CHAPTER XI

THE LAST DAYS

AT Tientsin James Gilmour was the guest of Dr Roberts—for too brief a time his colleague in Mongolia—and the doctor's sister, who kept house for him. The story of the closing days cannot be better told than in their words. To Miss Roberts fell the sorrowful task of sending the news of their irreparable bereavement to the two motherless lads in England.

"TIENTSIN, *June* 6, 1891.

"MY DEAR WILLIE AND JIMMIE,—You will wonder who I am that call you by your names and yet have never known you.

"But I think, when you hear that your dear father' spent the last five weeks of his life with my brother, Dr Roberts, and myself, perhaps you will not be sorry to get a few lines from an unknown friend. It is now many weeks since we received a letter from Mr Gilmour saying he hoped to be able to attend the annual meetings in Tientsin, and who would take him in? My brother replied at once, saying what a real pleasure it would be if he would stay with us. And so he came, and about a fortnight before the time, of which we were all the more glad. He looked the very picture of health on his arrival,

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and was in excellent spirits; many remarked how very well and strong he looked.

"I remember well the day he arrived, it was a Saturday afternoon. I suggested that he should have some dinner at once, but, thoughtful-like, as your father always was, he said, 'No, thank you, I have already had all I want; I shall not require anything more till your next ordinary meal.'

"By and by we showed him his room,, whose windows opened to the sun-rising.' We had made it as pretty and comfortable as we could, and brightened it with freshly cut flowers. The next day I noticed he had taken the tablecloth off his writing-table, and in the evening he handed it to me,

saying, if I remember rightly, 'Here, mademoiselle, is your tablecloth. I am afraid of inking it. You had better put it away.' I was grieved, and begged he would use, and ink it, too, for the matter of that; but it was no use, not on any account would he spoil my cloth, and therefore would not use it.

"He seemed very happy with us, and I think thoroughly appreciated the homelikeness of his surroundings after his lonely life in Mongolia, and the dismal rooms of a Chinese inn, and it was such a pleasure to minister to his comforts in every possible way we could think of.

"He used to spend his days, as a rule, in the following way:

"After breakfast he would write letters. At 10.45, after a cup of cocoa, he would go over to the hospital, returning at 1 o'clock to dinner. This over, he would go back with my brother to see the in-patients. At 4.30 we would all have tea together, after which he would make calls, or go for a walk, or talk over committee matters with Mr Lees or Mr Bryson. Many evenings he would be invited out, or would be at a meeting, or would spend it quietly at home; and so the time went by till meetings

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began. Then the whole day till 4 p.m. was spent in committee, and at six Mr Gilmour had a Bible class for an hour with the Chinese preachers who had come to attend some of the meetings.

"These were nearly over when your father began to complain of feeling done up and of having fever. The following Sunday he was in bed. This was only eleven days before he died. On Monday, however, he was better and up, and was able to be with us all day, and took the Communion with us all in the evening. Then we chatted together for some time and sang hymns, amongst others, 'God be with you till we meet again!' No. 494 in Sankey's *Songs and Solos*.

"In this connection let me tell you some of Mr Gilmour's favourite hymns in the book just mentioned. Amongst these were Nos. 494, 535, 150, 328. I dare say you would like so learn them and sing them for his sake.

"Your dear father was only in bed ten days before the end came, and all this time he spoke but little. He was too feverish and ill to want to talk or to listen: he just lay quietly, bearing his sickness with remarkable patience. One day, observing he was a little restless, I went to his bedside and asked him if he wanted anything. 'No, nothing,' was his reply, 'only that the Lord would deliver me out of this distress.'

"The last few days his mind was not clear, but all his wanderings were about his work. It was the last day but one of his life; he was more restless than usual, trying all the time to rouse himself, as if for a journey, when he looked up and said, 'Where are we going?'

"'To heaven,' I answered, 'to see the Lord.'

"'No,' he replied, 'that is not the address.'

"'Yes it is, Mr Gilmour,' I said again. 'We are going to heaven; would you not like to go and see the Lord Jesus?'

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"Then he seemed to take in the meaning of my words, and reverently bowed his head in assent, his lips quivered, and his eyes filled with tears; and he was quieted, like a weary child who has lost his way and finds on inquiry that only a few more steps and he will be at rest and at home.

"The next day, his last, was still more restless. At one time he seemed to be, addressing an audience and earnestly gesticulating with his hands; and, with as much force as he could command, he said: 'We are not spending the time as we should; we ought to be waiting on God in prayer for blessing on the work He has given us to do. I would like to make a rattling speech—but I cannot—I am very ill—and can only say these few words.' And then he nodded his head and waved his hand, as if in farewell to his listeners.

"It was seven o'clock in the evening when my brother saw the end was not far off, and at once we sent for all the 9ther members of the Mission that all might watch with him in this last solemn hour. He was unconscious the whole time, and his breathing laboured.

"The two doctors battled for an hour and a half to keep off Death's fatal grasp, but to no purpose: the Lord wanted His faithful worker, and we could not keep him, though we wanted him much, and knew that Willie and Jimmie in England needed him more.

"Gradually the breathing became quieter and quieter, till at last, about 9.30, he just closed his eyes and 'fell asleep,' with the peace of Heaven resting on his face."

In a letter sent by Dr Roberts to Dr Smith, who was then in England, a few further particulars are given.

"He preached one Sunday evening a very solemn sermon on 'Examine yourself,' and no one can soon

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forget the way he preached. During the annual meetings he was extra busy. Everyone remarked what a good chairman he made, and in the devotional meetings from g to 9.30 a.m. he was always ready to lead in prayer or speak a few words. Freshness, to the point, and to the heart—characterised all he did or said. In the evenings he conducted services for the native preachers present at the annual gathering, and to these meetings he took one foreigner each night to assist in the speaking.

"It was at the close of this busy week, when tired out, that he got the fever which eventually carried him home. The fever was very irregular in

type, but after some days I felt it was an exceptional type of typhus fever. Great weakness of the heart was a characteristic feature all through his case, and but for this sad complication I believe he would have been alive Today. Weak action of the heart was an old enemy of his. For the first week of his illness he did not feel very poorly, and we had many chats together, and some prayer and reading of God's Word every' night nearly. But in the second week his temperature went up to 106°, and, though it came down under antipyretics, he seemed never to regain his former ground. His mind became more and more clouded. Parker took the night nursing, my sister the day, and I sat with him when time allowed. On Thursday, May 21, the day on which he died, he was very delirious all day, though he knew us all. I did not give up hope till 7 p.m., when his heart failed him in spite of active stimulation. It was then that we all gathered round his bed. I did my utmost with the help of Frazer to avert the sad end; but ere long, seeing our efforts were vain, we ceased, and sat

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in his room and saw him gradually and very peacefully pass away, his breath getting feebler and feebler till he closed his eyes and fell asleep in Jesus."

The funeral took place towards evening on May 23, 1891. It was a lovely afternoon, and the sun shining brightly lent additional force to the words of John Bunyan which were printed upon the simple sheet containing theHymn to be sung at the grave: "The pilgrim they laid in an upper chamber whose window opened towards the Sun-rising." The coffin was borne to the grave by two relays of bearers; the first consisted of three European and three native preachers; the second, on the one side, of the Rev. S. E. Meech, his brother-in-law; the Rev. J. Parker, his colleague, and Dr Roberts; and on the other Liu, his faithful Chinese preacher and helper, Chang, the tutor of the theological class at Tientsin, and Hsi, his courier, a native of Tá Ssu˘ Kou. His last resting-place immediately adjoins that of his dearly loved friend, Dr Mackenzie, and the service at the grave was conducted by the Rev. Jonathan Lees and the Rev. J. Parker. Chang offered prayer, and a farewell hymn was sung:

Sleep on, beloved, sleep, and take thy rest;
Lay down thy head upon thy Saviour's breast;
We love thee well; but Jesus loves thee best—
Good night! Good night! Good night!

Until the shadows from this earth are cast;
Until He gathers in His sheaves at last;

Until the twilight gloom be overpast—
Good night? Good night! Good night!

Until we meet again before His throne,
Clothed in the spotless robe He gives His own,
Until we know even as we are known—
Good night! Good night! Good night!

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Little Chinese boys who had known and loved Mr Gilmour came forward and threw handfuls of flowers into his grave, loving hands laid upon the coffin a wreath of white blossoms on behalf of the now orphaned boys far away, and the simple but beautiful service was closed by a spontaneous act on the part of the Chinese converts present. Pressing near the grave of him. whose heart loved China and the Chinese with a fervour and an enthusiasm that may have been equalled, but certainly have never been surpassed, they sang in their own tongue the hymn beginning, "In the Christian's home in glory."

The labourer had entered into the rest he had so often seen by the eye of faith. "There remains," he wrote, less than a year before his death, "a rest. Somewhere ahead. Not very far at the longest. Perfect, quiet, full, without solitude, isolation, or inability to accomplish; when the days of our youth will be more than restored to us; where, should mysteries remain, there will be no torment in them. And the reunions there! Continuous too, with no feeling that the rest of Today is tomorrow to be ended by a plunge again into a world seething with iniquity, and groaning with suffering."

Many pages might be filled with loving eulogies of James Gilmour. But the best of all is the simple story of his life. Yet two or three references to his work and influence must here find a place.

From the pen of Dr Reynolds came this weighty testimony:

> "The end of his career came all too suddenly, and in gathering together my impressions of it as a whole, I am convinced that I have seldom seen a man so entirely

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> possessed by a grand idea, so utterly persuaded that we had a debt to pay to the heathen world, so invincibly sure that Christian faith and life was the one supreme need of these regions beyond our circle of light. Few men have cast the bread upon greater waters, have sown the seed over a wider area, or had to mourn more sadly over those heart-breaking months which

intervene between the seedtime and the harvest. Impartial critics have recognised the intense honesty, the shrewd wit, the faculty of vision, the power to tell the story of his rare experiences with such verisimilitude as to force upon the reader a ready acquiescence in every detail of his narrative. But his Christian brethren saw a deeper vein than this in Gilmour's achievements. He was ablaze from first to last with a passionate desire to set forth Christ in His majesty and mercy, in all His power to heal and to command. I had unexpected opportunities of finding how tender and affectionate his nature was; how grateful and enthusiastic his love to his Hamilton home, to his father, mother, and wife, and how faithful and loyal he was to the society and the brotherhood of his Alma Mater."

The Rev. G. Owen, at a memorial service held in Peking very shortly after Mr Gilmour's death, gave a sketch of his character and work, and thus summed up his life:

"He spared himself in nothing, but gave himself wholly to God. He kept nothing back. All was laid upon the altar. I doubt if even St Paul endured more for Christ than did James Gilmour. I doubt, too, if Christ ever received from human hands or human heart more loving, devoted service.

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"If anyone asks, 'Would it not have been better if Mr Gilmour had taken more care of himself and lived longer?' I would answer: 'I don't know. His life was beautiful, and I would not alter it if I could. A few years of such service as he gave Christ are worth a hundred years of humdrum toil. We need the inspiration of such a life as his. Heaven, too, is the richer for such a man and such a life. The pearly gates opened wide, I have no doubt, to receive him. Angels and men gave him glad welcome, and what a smile would light up the Saviour's face as He received His faithful servant home!'

"And he being dead yet speaketh. He says, 'Be faithful, work hard, for the night cometh when no man can work. Be earnest, for life is brief; be ready, for life is uncertain.' But why did God call him away in the midst of life and work? I don't know. Possibly work here is not of such importance as we think. Or there is more important service elsewhere waiting for such men as Mr Gilmour. He has been faithful over a few things; he has been made ruler over many things, and has entered into the joy of his Lord."

Mr Parker wrote to the sons of his late colleague on June 6, 1891:

"It is sad that my first letter to you should be to tell you about your father's death, of which no doubt you have heard long ago … The last photographs of yourselves which you sent out he always had where he could see them. Whenever he travelled he took them with him. At Tientsin during his last illness he had them on a low side table, just on a level with his bed, so that as he lay there he could see them … He was very happy, and

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died like a faithful soldier who had finished his work. It is sad, dear boys, to lose a father such as he was, but it is a great blessing to have had such a father, one so brave, so courageous, one who for the sake of Christ suffered bodily discomfort and pain, suffered terrible loneliness that he might win some of God's sinning children back to their Father's arms. He lived and suffered for the Mongols, and though God denied him the honour of baptizing even, one of them, yet so faithful was he to his work that he toiled on to the very last. 'Faithful unto death' are words fully exemplified in your father's life."

In his first letter from Mongolia after his prompt return to carryon in a like spirit of faith and devotion the work from which Mr Gilmour had been summoned away Mr Parker depicts the grief of the native Christians on learning their loss. "The sorrow of the converts here (Ch'ao Yang) at the news of Gilmour's death was very touching. Grown-up men burst into tears and sobbed like children when they were told he was dead. All along the route where Gilmour was such a familiar visitor, in the market-place, and at their fairs, the first question they asked as soon as they saw me was, 'Has Mr Gilmour come?' And at my reply there was always great astonishment, accompanied by expressions of sorrow. Every day at evening prayers I can hear Gilmour's name mingled with their petitions. The Christians here have sent a letter of sympathy to his two boys.

"Here in Ch'ao Yang there are any amount of Mongols, not nomadic, tent-loving, but settled here, and hence they do not have to be sought. Right in the centre of the town is an immense Mongol temple with two or

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three hundred priests. Every day I have several of the priests in here, and yet I have heard again and again that this mission is misplaced. Some such words often pained the heart that is now still in death. But this is, and shall be, essentially a Mongol mission in this, that as the best efforts of dear Gilmour were for making Christ known to the Mongols, my best endeavours shall be to this end. But if some hungry Chinaman, standing by as I hold out the bread of life to his Mongol brother, seeks to eat of it, he shall have it, and be as welcome as the other."

The letter to the children referred to in Mr Parker's report is a fitting description of James Gilmour's life, and he himself would have desired no other panegyric. It came from the hearts of men on whose behalf he had given his very best, and it shows how strong a hold he had obtained upon their affection.

"We respectfully inquire for the peace and happiness of your excellencies, our brothers Gilmour, also for the peace of your whole school. In the first place, Pastor Gilmour in his preaching and doctoring at Ch'ao Yang, north of the Pass, truly loved others as himself, was considerate and humble, and had the likeness of (our) Saviour Jesus. Not only the Christians thank him without end, but even those outside the Church (the heathen) bless him without limit. We, who through Pastor Gilmour have obtained the doctrine of the second birth, and received the grace of Jesus, had hoped with Mr Gilmour to have assembled on the earth until our heads were white and in the future life to have gone with him to heaven. Little did we think we should have been so unhappy. He has

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already gone to the Lord. We certainly know he is in the presence of the Lord, not only praying for us, but also for you our brothers.

"We pray you, when you see this letter, not to grieve beyond measure. We hope that you will study with increased ardour, so as to obtain the heavenly wisdom, like Solomon, and that afterwards you may come to China, to this Ch'ao Yang, to preach the Gospel widely. As the father did, may the sons follow, is our earnest desire.

"Signed by the Ch'ao Yang Christians,

"LIU MAO LIN (preacher). LIU I (your father's servant).

"P'ANG TIEN K'UEI.	SUNG KANG.
"WANG SHENG.	CHOU WEN YUAN.
"NING FU TUNG.	CHANG CHEN.
"CHANG WAN CH'UAN.	CHANG MAO CHI.
"CHANG KUEI.	NING KUANG CHEN.
"CHIANG SHENG.	LIU CHO.
"WANG HUI HSIEN.	T'IEN TE CH'UN.
	"HU TE."

Here, then, we leave him. If the story of his life fail to touch the heart, to deepen faith, to exalt our estimate of renewed human nature, and to revive enthusiasm in work for Christ at home and abroad, the fault must be in him who has tried to tell it, and to set in order the facts.

God's ways are ofttimes dark. James Gilmour had often felt this, and, to those who knew him, it seemed as though he were taken just when God's work needed him most, when the first-fruits of the coming harvest were being gathered, when his knowledge of the Chinese and the

Mongols, and their knowledge of him and affection for him, were beginning to tell. But God knows best, and

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nothing can deprive the Church of Christ of the splendid self-sacrifice, of the noble perseverance in the path of duty, of the bright example of courage, devotion, enthusiasm for souls, and patient continuance in well doing shining so clearly through all the long years of toil. Love, self-crucifixion, Jesus Christ closely followed in adversity, in loneliness, in manifold perils, under almost every conceivable form of trial and hindrance and resistance both active and passive-these are the seeds James Gilmour has sown so richly on the hard Mongolian Plain, and over its Eastern mountains and valleys. "In due time we shall reap if we faint not." His work goes on. He is now doing the Master's bidding in the higher service. There, we must fain believe, he is finding full scope for those altogether exceptional spiritual affinities, and powers and capacities which stand out so conspicuously all through the story of his inner life. Upon us who yet remain rests the responsibility of carrying forward the work he began, of reinforcing the workers, of bearing Mongolia upon our prayers until Buddhism shall fade away before the pure truth and the perfect love of Jesus Christ, and even the hard and unresponsive Mongols come to recognise the truths James Gilmour so long and so faithfully tried to teach them-that they need the Great Physician even more than they need the earthly doctor, and that He is more able and willing to heal the hurt of their souls than the earthly physician is to remove the disease of their bodies.

Is not the real lesson of James Gilmour's life twofold? If it be looked at from the point of view of results, it should give clear and vivid ideas of the unwisdom of being cast

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down by the absence of results in face of the difficulties of missionary work in China. It is to be feared that there are still large numbers of good Christian people who believe that for the conversion of Chinamen and Mongols all that is requisite is to put into the hands of the heathen a copy of God's Word in their native tongue, and then preach to them the good tidings of salvation. No man in this, or in any past generation, has done this more faithfully than James Gilmour. No man ever believed more firmly in the truth that it is "not by might nor by power," but by the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, that the intellect and conscience

and heart of the heathen are to be subdued to the Saviour. No man ever wrestled more eagerly and fervently in prayer on behalf of the ignorant and sinful, and yet his avowed converts can be numbered on the fingers. Does this prove that God is unfaithful? Does this tend to show that the enterprise is hopeless? Or has God been teaching us, by the life of one of His ablest and truest servants, the lesson of patient continuance in the path of His commands, whether He blesses or whether He withholds? Is He not proclaiming to His Church the need of a self-sacrifice *in all its members* commensurate with that displayed by James Gilmour and others who like him have not counted their lives dear unto themselves in the struggle with heathenism? Some must go in the "forlorn hope." Some must lay down their lives in preparing the highway of our God. "Herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth." But succeeding toilers in the Mongolian field, as the direct result of James Gilmour's sowing, will be able in days to come to apply to themselves our Lord's words, "I sent

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you to reap that whereon ye have not laboured: others have, laboured, and ye are entered into their labour."

If the life of James Gilmour be looked at altogether apart from the results that can be entered in tables of statistics, how splendidly inspiring it is! Faithful to his Master, faithful to his work, although the Master *seemed* to delay the blessing, although the work wore down the worker. "I," said St Paul to the thankless Corinthian Church, "will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less? But be it so." And in the Epistle to the Romans he applied to the Jews who were resisting the Gospel the ancient words of Isaiah: "But as to Israel He saith, All the day long did I spread out My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. I say then, Did God cast off His people? God forbid." Nor will God cast off the Israel of China, or the Mongols who gave to the faithful teacher respect, attention, and in a way the love of their hearts, but who as yet have not surrendered those hearts to their true Lord. James Gilmour, in season and out of season in almost constant solitude, in superabounding physical labours that often overburdened him, and once nearly broke him down, in the long disappointment of the most cherished hopes, and under the constant strain of what would have crushed any but a giant in faith, lived a life which, if it taught no other lesson, was yet well worth living to teach this-that Jesus Christ can and does give His servants the victory over

apparent non-success, after the most vehement and long-sustained effort to secure success, and that this is the greatest victory possible to renewed and sanctified human nature.