

JAMES GILMOUR OF MONGOLIA
HIS DIARIES LETTERS AND REPORTS

EDITED AND ARRANGED BY
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WITH A PORTRAIT, TWO MAPS AND
FIVE ILLUSTRATIONS

THIRD AND CHEAPER EDITION

LONDON
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
56 Paternoster Row, 65 St Paul's Churchyard 1895

O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found,
And found in Thee alone,
The peace, the joy I sought so long,
The bliss till now unknown.

I sighed for rest and happiness,
I yearned for them, not Thee;
But while I passed my Saviour by,
His love laid hold on me.

Now none but Christ can satisfy,
None other name for me;
There's love, and life, and lasting joy,

Lord Jesus, found in Thee.

PREFACE

This book in its more expensive forms has been before the public for nearly two years. It has been very widely read, and it has received extraordinary attention from many sections of the press. The author has received from all parts of the world most striking testimonies as to the way in which this record of James Gilmour's heroic self-sacrifice for the Lord Jesus and on behalf of his beloved Mongols for the Master's sake has touched the hearts of Christian workers. It has deepened their faith, strengthened their zeal, nerved them for whole-hearted consecration to the same Master, and cheered many a solitary and lonely heart.

Many requests have been received for an edition at a price which will place the book within the reach of Sunday School teachers, of those Christian workers who have but little to spend upon books, and of the elder scholars in our schools. The Committee of the Religious Tract Society have gladly met this request at the earliest possible moment.

In this new form their hope and prayer is that James Gilmour, being dead, may yet speak to many hearts, arousing them to diligent, and faithful, and self-denying service for Jesus Christ.

The book, in this its newest form, is identical in all respects with the first and second editions, except that only one portrait is given and the appendices are left out.

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For readers of James Gilmour of Mongolia not familiar with Among the Mongols, a new Edition of that Work has been prepared and published, price Two Shillings and Sixpence.

JAMES GILMOUR OF MONGOLIA

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 have survived him, has 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 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 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’ 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 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.

'Our maternal grandfather, John Pettigrew by name, was a farmer and meal-miller on the estate of Cathkin, and was considered a man of sterling worth and integrity. Having had occasion to send his minister, the parson of Carmunnock parish, some bags of oatmeal from his mill, the minister suspected from some cause or other that he had got short weight or measure. The worthy miller was rather nettled at being thus impeached by his spiritual overseer, and that same night proceeded to the manse with the necessary articles required for determining the accuracy of the minister's suspicions. When this was done, it was found there remained something to the good, instead of a deficiency; this the miller

swung over his shoulder in a bag and took back with him to the mill, as a lesson to the crestfallen divine to be more careful in future about challenging the integrity of his humble parishioner's transactions.

'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 railway part of the distance, viz. 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 tearful little “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 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 saw-mill, 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 rle 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 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 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 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 life-work 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 circumstances. In my present isolated position, which may be 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.’

In the record of his first outward voyage he included a sketch of his early life, which we briefly reproduce here, as the correlative and complement of the picture outlined by his brother:—

‘The earliest that I can remember of my life is the portion that was spent in Glasgow, before I came with my parents out to the country. Of this time I have only a vague recollection. Then followed a number of years not very eventful beyond the general lot of the years of childhood. One circumstance of these years often comes up to my mind. One Sabbath all were at church except the servant, Aggie Leitch, and myself. She took down an old copy of Bunyan’s *‘Pilgrim’s Progress’*, with rude plates, and by the help of the pictures was explaining the whole book to me. I had not heard any of it before, and was

deeply interested. We had just got as far as the terrible doings of Giant Despair and the horrors of Doubting Castle, when all at once, without warning, there came a terrible knock at our front door. I really thought the giant was upon us. It was some wayfaring man asking the way or something, but the terror I felt has made an indelible impression on me.

‘When of the approved age I went to school, wondering whether I should ever be able to learn and do as others did. I was very nervous and much afraid, and wrought so hard and was so ably superintended by my mother that I made rapid progress, and was put from one class to another with delightful rapidity. I was dreadfully jealous of any one who was a good scholar like myself, and to have any one above me in class annoyed me to such a degree that I could not play cheerfully with him.

‘The date of my going to college was, I think, the November of the year 1862, so that my first session at Glasgow University was 1862-63. The classes I took were junior Latin and junior Greek. In Latin I got about the twelfth prize, and in Greek I think the third. The summer I spent partly in study, partly in helping my father in his trade of a wright and joiner.

‘During 1863 and 1864 I lived in Glasgow, and worked very hard, taking the first prize in middle Greek and a prize in senior Latin, as well as a prize for private work in Greek, and another for the same kind of work in Latin. This last I was specially proud of, as in it I beat the two best fellows in the Latin class. Next session (1864-65) I took a prize in senior Greek. I got nothing in the logic, but in moral philosophy in 1865 I was one of those who took an active part in the

rebellion against Dr. Fleming, who, though he was entitled to the full retiring pension, preferred to remain on as professor, taking the fees and appointing a student to do the work. We made a stand against this, and were able to bring him out to his work; but it was too much for him, and he died in harness, as he had wished.

‘In English literature I made no appearance in the pieces noted by the students, but came out second in the competitive examination, which of course astonished a good deal some of the noisy men who had answered so much in the class and yet knew so little. I was really proud of this prize, as I was sure it was honestly won, and as I also felt that from my position in class I failed to get credit for anything like what I knew. This session I went in for the classical and philosophy parts of the degree, and got them. I enjoyed a happy week after it was known that I had passed; and the next thing I had to look forward to was going to the Theological Hall of the Congregational Church of Scotland, which met in Edinburgh in the beginning of May. The session at Edinburgh I enjoyed very much. I had not too much work, and used at odd times to take long walks and go long excursions. I was often on the heights, and about Leith and Portobello.’

The Rev. John Paterson of Airdrie, N.B., Gilmour’s most intimate college friend at Glasgow, thus records his recollections of what he was in those days:—

‘I first made James Gilmour’s acquaintance in the winter session of 1864-5 at Glasgow University. He came to college with the reputation of being a good linguist. This reputation was soon confirmed by distinction in his classes, especially in

Latin and Greek. Though his advantages had been superior to most of us, and his mental calibre was of a high order, he was always humble, utterly devoid of pride or vanity. No doubt he was firm as a rock on any question of conviction, but he was tender in the extreme, and full of sympathy with the struggling. He was such a strong man all round that he could afford to give every one justice, and such a gentleman that he could not but be considerate. One day a country student through sheer nervousness missed a class question in the Junior Humanity, though the answer was on his tongue: the answering of such a question would have brought any man to the front, and with a sad heart he told his experience to Gilmour, whose look of sympathy is remembered to this day. He always seemed anxious to be useful, and he succeeded. During our second session, a brother of mine married a cousin of his, and this union led to a closer intimacy between us, and in future sessions we lodged together.

‘Throughout his college career Gilmour was a very hard-working student; his patience, perseverance, and powers of application were marvellous; and yet, as a rule, he was bright and cheerful, able in a twinkling to throw off the cares of work, and enter with zest into the topics of the day. He had a keen appreciation of the humorous side of things, and his merry laugh did one good. Altogether he was a delightful companion, and was held in universal esteem. One of Gilmour’s leading thoughts was unquestionably the unspeakable value of time, and this intensified with years. There was not a shred of indolence in his nature; it may be truthfully said that he never wilfully lost an hour. Even when the college work was uncongenial, he never scamped it, but mastered the subject. He could not brook the idea of skimming a subject merely to pass

an examination, and there were few men of his time with such wide and accurate knowledge.

‘Unlike many of his fellows, he did not relax his energies in summer. During the recess he might have been seen wending his way from the old home at Cathkin to the college library, and returning laden with books. His superior scholarship secured for him excellent certificates and many prizes, both for summer and winter work, and it was noticeable that he shone most in written examinations. On one occasion, in the Moral Philosophy class, which then suffered from the failing health of the professor, the teacher *pro tem.* appended, as a criticism of an essay of Gilmour’s on Utilitarianism, the words, “Wants thoroughness.” This was a problem to the diligent student, who tackled his critic at the end of the hour, and apparently had the best of the argument; for he told me afterwards that he had puzzled the judge to explain his own verdict. There was a strong vein of combativeness in him; he liked to try his strength, both mentally and physically, with others; and it was no child’s play to wrestle with him in either sense, though he never harboured ill-feeling. He had the advantage of being in easy circumstances, but was severely economical, wasting nothing. He had quite a horror of intoxicating drinks. On one occasion, perhaps for reasons of hospitality, some beer had found its way into our room: he quietly lifted the window and poured the dangerous liquid on the street, saying, “Better on God’s earth than in His image.”

‘As the close of his career in Glasgow drew near, some of us could see that all through he had been preparing for some great work on which the whole ambition of his life was set. He always shrank from speaking about himself, and in those days

was not in the habit of obtruding sacred things on his fellow-students. His views on personal dealing then were changing, and became very decided in after years. Earnest, honest, faithful to his convictions, as a student he endeavoured to influence others for good more by the silent eloquence of a holy life than by definite exhortations, and I feel sure his power over some of us was all the greater on that account. When it became known that Gilmour intended to be a foreign missionary, there was not a little surprise expressed, especially among rival fellow-students—men who had competed with him to their cost. The moral effect of such a distinguished scholar giving his life for Christ among the heathen was very great indeed. To me his resolve to go abroad, though it induced a painful separation, proved an unspeakable blessing. The reserve which had so long prevailed between us on sacred things began to give way, and much of our correspondence during his residence at Cheshunt College was of a religious turn, though still more theological than practical.

‘The last evening we spent together before he left for China can never be forgotten. We parted on Bothwell Bridge. We had walked from the village without speaking a word, burdened with the sorrow of separation. As we shook hands, he said with intense earnestness, “Paterson, let us keep close to Christ.” He knew Him and loved Him much better than I did then; but about nine years ago, after hearing good news from me, he wrote to say that for twelve years he had prayed for me every day, and now praised God for the answer.’

In the diary from which we have already quoted Gilmour thus concludes the sketch of his education:—

‘Near the close of the session of 1867 I opened negotiations with the London Missionary Society, the consequence of which was that I was removed to Cheshunt College in September of that same year. Here (1867-1868) a new experience awaited me—resident college life. At Glasgow we dined out, presented ourselves at classes only, and did with ourselves whatever we liked in the interval. At Cheshunt it was different. All the students live in the buildings of the college, which can accommodate forty. Of course I felt a little strange at first, and even long after had serious doubts as to the settlement of the question, Which is better, life in or out of college? The lectures, as a rule, were all in the forenoon.

‘The summer vacation I spent in studying for the Soper scholarship, value twenty pounds, which was to be bestowed after examination.

‘I commenced the 1868 and 1869 session at Cheshunt, very busily, and in addition to the class work and the Soper work, read some books which gave almost a new turn to my mind and my ideas of pastoral or missionary life. These books were James’s *‘Earnest Ministry’*, Baxter’s *‘Reformed Pastor’*, and some of Bunyan’s works, which, through God’s blessing, affected me very much for good.

‘The Soper examination should have come off before Christmas, but it did not, so that I remained over Christmas at Cheshunt, grinding away as hard as I could. I was longing eagerly for the time when the examination would be over, that I might the more earnestly devote myself to the work of preaching and evangelising. Well, the examination came and passed off satisfactorily, and I got the twenty pounds.

‘Now was the decisive point. Now had I come to another period, when there was an opportunity of going on a new tack; but I found myself tempted to seek after another honour, the first prize in Cheshunt College. In my first session I had got the second only, and now I had an opportunity of trying for the first. It was a temptation indeed, but God triumphed. I looked back on my life, and saw how often I had been tempted on from one thing to another, after I had resolved that I would leave my time more free and at my disposal for God, but always was I tempted on. So now I made a stand, threw ambition to the winds, and set to reading my Bible in good earnest. I made it my chief study during the last three months of my residence at Cheshunt, and I look back upon that period of my stay there as the most profitable I had.

‘In September, 1869, I entered the missionary seminary at Highgate, and also studied Chinese in London with Professor Summers. I went home again at Christmas, and on returning to London learned that I could go to China as soon as I liked. I said I would go as soon as the necessary arrangements could be made, and February 22, 1870, was fixed upon as the date of my departure.’

In this brief and rapid manner James Gilmour sketched, with not a few most characteristic touches, the first twenty-six years of his life. He enables us to see the quick, merry, receptive lad, developing, after a brilliant collegiate course and a careful training in theology and in practical Christian life, into the strong, resolute missionary. No one who knew him during this time failed to perceive the force of his character and the charm of his personality. The writer first came under his influence

during his second session at Cheshunt. He was then in the prime of his early manhood, in the full possession of physical and intellectual vigour, and his soul was aflame with love to the Saviour and to the perishing heathen.

He retained, moreover, the love of fun, the high spirits, the keen enjoyment of a good joke, and the constant readiness for an argument upon any subject under the sun, which had endeared him to his comrades in Glasgow. Every Cheshunt man of that day readily recalls, and rejoices as he does so, the memory of his good-natured practical joking, of his racy and pointed speeches upon all momentous 'house questions,' of his power as a reciter, and of his glowing personal piety. To know him even slightly was to respect him; and to enter at all into sympathy with him was to love him as long as life lasted.

There are many reminiscences of those Cheshunt days, from which we can cull only a sufficient number to enable the reader to understand what manner of man he then was. These are drawn from the letters of his fellow-students, and from their recollections of his sayings and doings. 'How well,' writes one, 'I remember his coming to Cheshunt! I was acting-senior at the opening of that session, and, according to custom with the new men, went to his room to shake hands with him. He said, "Who are you?" I told him. "What do you want?" I told him I had come according to custom to welcome him, and held out my hand, whereupon he put his hands behind him and said, "Time eno' to shake hands when we've quarrelled. But where do you live?" "Immediately over your head." "Then look here," said he, "don't make a row;" and so we parted. Dear old fellow! his memory makes life richer.'

Another writes: ‘He was a good elocutionist. He was also a keen debater, and so fond of argument that he would not hesitate to take opposite ground to his own cherished convictions and beliefs, simply for the sake of provoking discussion. So earnestly and logically (for he was a good dialectician) would he carry on the discussion that it was difficult to believe that he did not really hold the opinions for which he so pertinaciously contended. Sometimes this habit of mind reacted very amusingly upon himself, as the following will show. The subject fixed one Friday evening for debate in the discussion class was, “Have animals souls?” Though fully accepting the common belief that they have not, Gilmour, purely for the sake of argument, took the affirmative, and with such enthusiasm pleaded his cause that he brought himself to believe, as he told me afterwards, that animals have souls.’

‘At no time during his residence at Cheshunt could there have been any doubt as to Gilmour’s piety or consecration to the great work of his future life; but during the second year it must have been manifest to all who knew him intimately that there was a deepening and broadening of his spiritual life. As I look back over the interval of years I can see that it was then he began to reach the high-water mark in Christian life and devotion which was so steadily maintained throughout his career in China and Mongolia. An apostolic passion for the salvation of his fellow-men took hold upon him. He would go out in the evening, mostly alone, and conduct short open-air services at Flamstead End, among the cottagers near Cheshunt railway station; seize opportunities of speaking to labourers working by the roadside or in the field through which he might be passing. He became very solicitous for the conversion of friends in Scotland, and would come to my study and ask me

to kneel and pray with him that God's grace might be manifested to them, and that His blessing might rest upon letters which he had written and was sending to them. The ordinary style of preaching towards which students usually aspire lost its attractions for him, and his sermons assumed more and more the character of earnest exhortations, and addresses to the unconverted. When he knew what was to be his field of labour after his college course was over, how solicitous he was to go out fully prepared and fitted in spiritual equipment! The needs of the perishing heathen were very real and weighed heavily upon his heart, and he was very anxious to win volunteers among his college friends for this all-important work. How he longed and prayed for China's perishing millions only his most intimate friends know.'

The Rev. H. R. Reynolds, D.D., for the past thirty years the honoured President of Cheshunt College, has 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 commissioner. He started from the chapel entrance, 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 awe-struck 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.’

In the year 1869 the policy of the London Missionary Society in the education of its students was very different from that which now obtains. After a course at a theological college of two, three, or four years, according to the literary attainments of the man at the time of his acceptance by the Directors, he was sent to the institution at Highgate designed to give training suitable for the special requirements of the embryo missionaries. In theory this institution was admirable; in practice Gilmour and others, much as they esteemed the principal, the Rev. J. Wardlaw, found it—or thought they found it—very largely a waste of time. The year 1869 saw the beginning of an investigation which ended in closing the missionary college at Highgate, and in the steps that led to the enquiry Gilmour took a leading part. One of his contemporaries at Highgate has thus described his influence upon both his fellow-students and the institution to which they belonged.

‘I first met Gilmour at Farquhar House, Highgate, the London Missionary Society’s Institution, where in those days missionary students spent their last six months before going to the field. Some spent the time in studying the elements of the language of the land to which they were going; others attended University College Hospital, for the purpose of getting a little medical knowledge; while all tried to make themselves acquainted with the history of the people among whom they were to labour. Courses of special missionary lectures, which were highly valued by the men, were delivered by the Rev. J., afterwards Dr., Wardlaw.

‘Some of us were at Highgate a day or two before Gilmour came up from Scotland; and as his fame, or rather reports about him, had reached us from Cheshunt College, we were all very anxious to meet with him. When he did arrive we were, I think, all more or less disappointed, and yet I doubt if any of us could have told why, except that he was not the man we had pictured from the reports we had heard. When he walked quietly into the library I, for one, could hardly believe that the almost boyish-looking, open-faced, bright-eyed young man was really Gilmour. His dress made him appear even more youthful than he was, while there was an aspect of good humour about his face and a glance of his eye revealing any amount of fun and frolic. A great writer has said: “Nature has written a letter of credit on some men’s faces, which is honoured almost wherever presented.” James Gilmour’s was a face on which Nature had written no ordinary letter of credit; for there was a sense in which one might very truly have said that his “face was his fortune.” Honesty, good nature, and true manliness were so stamped upon every feature and line of it, that you had only to see him to feel that he was one of God’s noblest works, and to be drawn to the man as by a magnetic influence.

‘Gilmour was a puzzle to most of our fellow-students, and they could not quite make him out. By some he was: regarded as very eccentric, which is another way of saying that he preserved a very marked individuality, and always had the courage of his convictions. They did not seem to understand how so much playfulness and piety, fervour and frolicsomeness could dwell in the same person. Long before we parted, however, in January, 1870, I feel certain that all had

come to have not only a profound respect, but also a real heart-love for “dear old Gillie”!

‘The night before Gilmour left Highgate for the Christmas vacation we were all in his study, when someone, remarking on the risk he was running in going home to Scotland by sea, instead of by train, said in a jocular way: “Suppose the steamer is wrecked and you get drowned, to whom do you leave your books, Gilmour?” “Yes,” he said at once, “that is well thought of. Come along, you fellows, and pick out the books you would like to keep in memory of me, if I never return.” Of course we only laughed and said it was all a joke; but he said, “It is no joke with me, I mean what I say;” and so he did. He was in dead earnest, and nothing would satisfy him but that each should pick out the book or books he would like to have if he never returned. He then turned to me and said: “Now, I leave the rest to your care, and if I never return I want all on this shelf sent to my father and mother, and you can do anything you like with the rest.” Had anyone else acted in that way, we should have certainly suspected that he had gone “_queer_”; but it was Gilmour, and we all understood the straight, matter-of-fact way in which he went about everything he did.

‘Through a misunderstanding, as we afterwards discovered, the students at Highgate came into collision with the Directors of the Society over the studies to be prosecuted. Additional classes were arranged, and these some of us declined to attend. This act of rebellion, as it was regarded at the Mission House, had to be put down with a firm hand, and a special meeting of the Board of Directors was called to deal with us.

‘The night before we were to meet the Board we met in Gilmour’s study, to settle what we were to say to the Directors when we met them. One only of our number, when he saw that there was likely to be a rather serious interchange of ideas between us and the Directors, caved in completely, and would have nothing further to do with our resistance.

‘When we met the Board Gilmour made his defence in his frank, straightforward way, and, I am afraid, upset some of the Directors very much by his plain speaking. They did not know the man, and regarded him as one of the ringleaders in rebellion, and, of course, were not in the humour to do him justice. But when we met the subcommittee appointed to deal with us the misunderstanding came to an end, and they admitted that we had been in the right in objecting to the extra classes thus imposed.’

During these last months in England James Gilmour paid much earnest heed to the culture of his soul. Just before he sailed for China, he set forth his inner experience and his keen sense of the difficulties of the course upon which he was embarking in the following letter to a Cheshunt friend:—

‘Companions I can scarcely hope to meet, and the feeling of being alone comes over me till I think of Christ and His blessed promise, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” No one who does not go away, leaving all and going alone, can feel the force of this promise; and when I begin to feel my heart threatening to go down, I betake myself to this companionship, and, thank God, I have felt the blessedness of this promise rushing over me repeatedly when I knelt down and spoke to Jesus as a present companion, from

whom I am sure to find sympathy. I have felt a tingle of delight thrilling over me as I felt His presence, and thought that wherever I may go He is still with me. I have once or twice lately felt a melting sweetness in the name of Jesus as I spoke to Him and told Him my trouble. Yes, and the trouble went away, and I arose all right. Is it not blessed of Christ to care so much for us poor feeble men, so sinful and so careless about honouring Him? the moment we come to Him He is ready with His consolations for us!

‘I have been thinking lately over some of the inducements we have to live for Christ, and to confess Him and preach Him before men, not conferring with flesh and blood. Why should we be trammelled by the opinions and customs of men? Why should we care what men say of us? Salvation and damnation are realities, Christ is a reality, Eternity is a reality, and we shall soon be there in reality, and time shall soon be finished; and from our stand in eternity we shall look back on what we did in time, and what shall we think of it? Shall we be able to understand why we were afraid to speak to this man or that woman about salvation? Shall we be able to understand how we were ashamed to do what we knew was a Christian duty before one whom we knew to be a mocker at religion? Our cowardice shall seem small to us then. Let us now measure our actions by the standard of that scene, let us now look upon the things of time in the light of eternity, and we shall see them better as they are, and live more as we shall wish then we had done. It is not too late. We can secure yet what remains of our life. The present still is ours. Let us use it. It may be that we can’t be great, let us be good; if we can’t shine as great lights, let us make our light shine as God has made it to shine. Let us live lives as in the presence of Christ,

anxious for His approval, and glad to take the condemnation of the world, and of Christ's professed servants even, if we get the commendation of angels and our Master. The "well done!" is to the faithful servant—to the _faithful_, not the great. Let us watch and pray that we may be faithful. It is a little hard to be this, and to care little for man.

'Yesterday afternoon I preached here at home, and took the most earnest sermon I had, "_Behold, I stand at the door and knock_" Well, in doing so, I thought I was acting quite independently of man; and even after I had preached it, thought I would not care for man. But one man praised it, and I felt pleased, and, as might then be expected, felt a little hurt when a friend called this morning and told me that what I gave them yesterday was _no sermon at all_. Now, if I had been regarding Christ alone, I would not have been moved by either the one or the other of these criticisms; and I wish that I could get above this sort of thing, and get beyond the attempt at pleasing men at all. Why should we confer with men?'

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 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, viz., 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 overtaxed at home; what then must be the case 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 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 1,200 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 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 _vi_ 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 holy-day 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 half 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, &c., &c., for me to go out as a missionary—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 quarter-master. 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 fore-castle 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. 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 lookout 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.'

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 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 to-night and with the gate-keeper 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 to-day 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 inspiring 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 evangelization 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!’

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 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.

‘_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 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 anyone 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 Christlike, 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 souls life is insured from all harm. 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, &c., 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 in 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 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, 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, 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.’

[Illustration: MAP ILLUSTRATING JAMES GILMOUR'S
JOURNEYS ON THE GREAT PLAIN OF MONGOLIA]

CHAPTER III

MONGOLIAN APPRENTICESHIP

The name Mongolia denotes a vast and almost unknown territory situated between China Proper and Siberia, constituting the largest dependency of the Chinese Empire. It stretches from the Sea of Japan on the east to Turkestan on the west, a distance of nearly 3,000 miles; and from the southern boundary of Asiatic Russia 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 the considerable commercial traffic between China and Russia runs through the eastern central part of Mongolia, leaving China at the frontier town of Kalgan, and touching Russia 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 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 southeastern 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 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]

[1] *Among the Mongols*, p. 211.

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.

‘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 to-day. My mind feels at rest for the present. I am looking about me, and having my first look at the life I 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!’

His constant rule was to rest from all journeying, 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 to-day in II 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, &c., 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 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 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 whole-hearted 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 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! To-day 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 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 Chestnut 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 A 1, 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, if I 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.

‘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?

‘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 found 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[2] to attend to his wants, one of whom goes with 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.'

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

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?

‘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 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 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 to-day 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 someone 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.”

‘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.

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

'_October 14, '71. _—To-day 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 uncomfot 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 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 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 1, 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 to-day. 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 I 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 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 turn-coats 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 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 Amsa, 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 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 1,000 miles.

Gilmour’s first estimate of this region as a field of missionary enterprise, expressed on April 25, 1872, remained true to the end, even though in later years the exceptional difficulties of work among the nomads induced him at last, as we shall see, to settle among the agricultural Mongols:—

‘Though I saw a good many Mongol houses, yet I must say, I do not feel much drawn to them in preference to the nomad Mongols. The only possible recommendation I can think of is that, coming among them, I might go and put up for some days at a time in a Chinese inn. This would save me from great trouble in getting introductions, and it might be less expensive. The great objection I have to them is that, though a mission were established among them, it would be more a mission in China than anywhere else. The Mongols in these agricultural villages speak Chinese to a man, and I cannot help feeling that, since there are so many missionaries in Peking speaking the Chinese language, these Mongols fall to them, and not to me.’

Soon after his return from this trip into Eastern Mongolia, Mr. Gilmour sent home an elaborate report upon the conditions and prospects of the Mongol Mission. He deals with the whole question of the work, showing why, in his opinion, the agricultural Mongols should be evangelised by Chinese missionaries. Mr. Edkins and others thought that Gilmour should undertake that labour, but after having seen more than any missionary of both regions and classes of Mongols, on the ground that he was the man ‘who had to go and begin,’ he decided for the Plain.

Even at this early date Mr. Gilmour urged repeatedly and strenuously upon the Directors the pressing need he felt for a colleague. And thus early began the long series of seeming fatalities that prevented him from ever receiving this joy and strength. Partly from the needs of the Peking Mission, and partly from respect to a notion which the American Board of Foreign Missions had that their occupancy of Kalgan, on the

extreme southern limit, constituted _all_ Mongolia into one of their fields of work, the Rev. S. E. Meech, Mr. Gilmour's old college friend, who had been designated as his first colleague, was stationed at Peking. With reference to this, in closing the report above referred to, Gilmour wrote:—

‘Mr. Meech’s perversion from Mongolia to China is much to be deplored. I think it would be wrong in me not to inform you of the true state of matters, and to remind you that it is little short of nonsense to speak of reopening the Mongolian Mission so long as there is only one man in the field. I am fully aware of the difficulty of finding suitable men, and most fully sympathise with you, but don’t let us delude ourselves with the idea of Mongol Mission work progressing till another man or two come and put their shoulder to the wheel. All that I can do I am quite willing to do, but my own progress is most seriously hampered because I am alone.’

His whole subsequent life is evidence of the splendid way in which Gilmour justified these words, yet perhaps no legitimate blame can be laid at the door of the Directors of the London Missionary Society. Both the friends and the critics of missions are sometimes more ready to tabulate converts than to ponder and estimate aright the difficulties and drawbacks of the work. But in any estimate of the comparative success and failure of the Mongol Mission it should be borne in mind that Gilmour never really had a colleague. He never even had a companion for his work on the Plain, except his heroic and devoted wife. And in later years circumstances over which the Directors could exercise little or no control successively deprived him of the fellowship, after a very brief experience, of Dr. Roberts and Dr. Smith.

In the summer of this year, in the company of Mr. Edkins, he visited the sacred city of Woo T'ai Shan, a famous place of Mongol pilgrimage.

An amusing illustration of his well-known love of argument occurred on this trip. In Mr. Edkins he found a foeman in all respects worthy of his dialectic steel. Chinese mules will only travel in single file, even where the roads are wide enough to allow of their travelling abreast, and as Gilmour's went in front of that ridden by Mr. Edkins, he used to ride with his face to the tail of his beast, and thus the more readily and continuously conduct the argument than engaging their attention.

In November he tried the experiment of living at the Yellow Temple in Peking during the winter, in order that he might meet and converse with the numerous Mongols who visit the capital every year. Here he not only made new friends, but he also frequently renewed acquaintance with those he had met on the Plain. These visited him in his compound, and were occasionally a weariness and vexation to him, inasmuch as they very frequently severely tried his patience, without affording him the comfort of knowing that the good tidings of the 'Jesus book' were finding an entrance into their dark minds and hard hearts.

In a letter to an intimate college friend, the Rev. T. T. Matthews of Madagascar, which he wrote, November 21, 1872, he vividly describes this part of his work, giving some of his typical experiences:—

‘I am writing in the Yellow Temple, about a mile and a half from Peking, and three or four miles from our mission premises. I have rented a room, brought my Chinaman servant, and live as a Chinaman, all but the clothes and the paganism. The reason of all this is that near here, and in this temple, numerous Mongols put up when they come from Mongolia to Peking. Our premises being three or four miles away, and in a busy part of the town, the Mongols can’t easily find our place; so if they can’t come to me I just go to them. I came here yesterday, and can’t tell yet how I may get on. Mongols are shy in Peking, and even out here a little difficult of access; but I must do what I can, and have patience.

‘Just now a company of eight or ten have arrived and put up, three or four of them in the same court with me, the others in a place close by. These are likely enough to come to see me; of course I’ll go and see them. You in Madagascar, I suppose, can’t realise what it is to be a missionary to a people whom you can’t approach without difficulty. Here the difficulty does not end; those I can catch don’t care one straw for Christianity. They have a system which quite satisfies them, and what more do they want? Such is their feeling, so you see I have got quite plenty to do; a hard enough task, even the human part of it. But don’t mistake, I am not bewailing my lot, for that I have neither time nor inclination; I am only telling you about my state.

‘I don’t believe much in people talking about what they mean to do in the future, but perhaps you will permit me to say that I would like to start for Mongolia again in February or March. I have got a sheepskin coat, so need not fear the cold. I perhaps may take with me a stock of made-up medicines for specific

diseases which are common, and this may make an introduction in some cases at least. Dr. Dudgeon has on our premises in Peking a hospital well attended by Chinamen, and I go there sometimes and see how he doses them.

‘Now let me tell you a little about the inner life of Mongols. People travelling through Mongolia wake up in the morning as their camel-cart passes some rural encampment; they rub their eyes and say, “How pleasant it would be to live in Mongolia like these Mongols, free from care and the anxiety of busy life. They have only their sheep, &c., to look after.” This reflection is accompanied with a sigh when they reflect on their own hard lot. Now the fact of the matter is, these travellers know nothing about it. They may print as much as they like about the pastoral felicity of the simplicity of Mongol life; it is all humbug. Last night, two Mongols whom I know well, a petty chief named “Myriad Joy” and his scribe named “Mahabul” (I can’t translate this last), came into my room, and we had a tea-spree there and then. The two have been for fifteen days in Peking on Government duty, and last night their business was finished, and they were to mount their camels and head north this morning. The chief gets from Peking about 30_l._ a year, the scribe about 4_l._; and when they come thus on duty their allowances, though small, enable them to make a little over and above their salaries. The chief can stand no small amount of Chinese whisky. I suspect he is deep in debt, and am sure that he could pay his debt two or three times over if he only had the money it took to paint his nose. The scribe was one of my teachers in Mongolia. I lived in his house some time, and know only too well about his affairs. He is hopelessly in debt. He had a large family once, but now they are all dead except one married daughter and one lama son about seventeen years

of age, and good for nothing. His “old woman,” as the Mongol idiom has it, is still alive, and fond of whisky, like her husband. If they had only been teetotalers they might have now been comfortable; such, at least, is my impression. I shall say nothing about what I saw in his tent, and confine myself to last night and this morning.

‘Drinking my tea last night, Mahabul (the scribe) says to me: “My chief here won’t lend me nine shillings to buy a sheepskin coat for my old woman, therefore she must be frozen to death in the winter; my chief won’t lend me anything, other people he lends.” The chief said nothing for a while; but the scribe went on harping on this string, till at last the chief launched out right and left on his scribe, shouting loud enough for all the compound to hear. The scribe took it coolly, and stopped him, saying: “Enough, enough; it is past, it is past; my old woman can die, all die; no matter.” This did not soothe the irate chief at all, and a minute or two later a furious quarrel broke out between them about something else. The storm raged a long time, and in my room too, while they were my guests! After some time the scribe left the room to attend to the camels, when the chief confided to me his opinion of his scribe. Later the chief left the room, and the scribe confided to me his opinion of his chief; and I must say that the two seemed well matched, with very little to choose between. The freedom with which they spoke of each other was partly to be accounted for by the fact that both were more or less drunk.

‘The chief squared up his accounts with the people about here, and showed me in the scribe’s absence a small parcel of silver which he had reserved for use on the road. He showed it me under strict injunctions not to tell the scribe. The scribe had

more difficulty in squaring up his account. The last item that stuck in his throat was a little bill his son had left. This son had started a day or two before, and of course the father was responsible for the debt. How he was to pay it he did not know, as he had not a single cash about him. The Chinaman of the place threatened to detain him, and the scribe laughed a bitter laugh at the idea. After a great row they went off to sleep.

‘This morning early the scribe was at me before I was dressed. It was the small debt again. The Chinaman knew better than to seize the man; that would not have paid; he seized his coat, and actually was detaining that as ransom for a sum equal to fourpence English! He made a direct appeal to me to pay it, and of course I did it; though I was a little disgusted with the man’s meanness, as I had given him a present of money amounting to about 1_l. a few days before. This son of his is a great eyesore to me. He is a young lama, about as wicked a boy as I know. His brothers died of consumption, and this fact enables him to do anything he likes with his parents. If they refuse anything, he has only to feign sickness, and they are in a huge state over him. He is a thoroughly bad lad. Will not work, will not study, will do nothing but make trouble and expense for his parents. Just fancy! His father and mother are poor as church mice; and when his father was coming to Peking the boy must beg to come too, and the father like a fool must take him, and be at great expense for travelling, &c. One thing made me furious. Out of the money I gave him he spent about 4_s. or more buying his good-for-nothing son an elegant snuff-bottle. In short, the man’s folly makes it utterly useless to help him. I once before relieved him from threatened detention for debt for the amount of twopence-halfpenny, just after I had made him a present, and I expect perhaps to have to do so

again. What astonishes me is that the Mongols can get into debt so far. I don't believe my Mongol can pass a single man he knows without being in danger of being dunned for some hopeless debt or other. And yet his debt does not seem to distress him. He is most distressed because people will not lend him more money.

'The last of the chiefs was rather rich. He is (he says) to have a profitable piece of Government work in hand in spring, and on the strength of that wanted me to lend him now a shoe of silver, about 15 l., to be repaid to me in spring. Of course I did not. He then, though my guest, kept on saying, "Heart small, heart small," which pretty much amounts to saying, "Coward, coward." He finally took revenge by offering to lend me a shoe of silver in spring, but of course I declined. A pretty pair they are! If what they say be true, in spring they may make a good thing of it; but this has happened to the scribe before, and in two months after he was as poor as ever. In short, they are foolish and thriftless.

'While I have been writing this letter I have overheard my Chinese servant saying, in reply to a question from a Chinaman, "There is such a thing as a preaching letter: you can preach by a letter." So I am going now to preach. Don't get weary; stick to it. Don't be lazy, but don't be in a hurry. Slow but sure; stick to it. We have no great effort to make, but rather to stick to it patiently. "No good work is lost," Sir William Thomson used to say in his philosophy class, and it is eminently true in our case. (I wish these Chinamen would hold their tongue.) All our good work will be found, there is no doubt about that. All I am afraid of is that our good work will amount to little when it is found. (These Chinamen are a bore.)

I sometimes think that if all we say be true, as it is, that men at last shall stand before God—and we shall see them after they know that all we say is true—and they will pitch into us for not pitching into them more savagely; for not, in fact, taking them by the “cuff” of the neck and dragging them into the kingdom of God. I speak now of our countrymen and foreigners. As regards heathen, they too shall stand revealed; and their mud gods also, and rotten superstitions, shall stand revealed: how then shall we feel when they shall look at us and blame us for not waking them up more vigorously? An infidel has said that if he could believe that men’s future state depended at all upon what was done in this life, he would let nothing hinder him from being up and at men. He would be content to be counted a madman—anything, if only he could do anything to make men’s state better in the world to come. (I wish these Chinamen would shut up; I came here to meet Mongols, and I am like to be flooded out by Chinamen whose language I only half understand.)

‘Now, we believe: how much do we do? Are there not some men whom we might stir up who now escape? Could we do more? Are not souls valuable enough for us to face anything if only we can save some? Let us look to the end, or rather let us look at the present. In the room in which I now write (the Chinamen have gone) is Jesus, where you read this is Jesus: He stands and looks to us. He has given up the clean heaven, and walked here and lived among dirt and poverty, in solitude, misunderstood, without one intelligent friend; He has borne the scorn of men, He has been put to the horrible and shameful death of the cross, all to save us and others. We trust Him, He saves us; and all He asks is that we should tell men about what He has done; and is there one man we meet to whom we

shall not speak? shall Christ look to us in vain to declare simply what He has done? Perish the thought! Whatever may be between us and speaking to men, let us go through it. If it be a foreign language, remember Christ lived thirty years in preparation. If it be hardship, cold, poor food, scorn, slight, deaf ears—never mind, go ahead. Christ looks to us to go ahead, or come ahead, for He has gone through it all. Trouble, hardship, trial, suffering,—all will soon pass and be done. And is there a trouble or hardship we have yet surmounted for Christ’s sake that does not seem sweet to look back on? Then, come what likes, let us face it; or, if we be overwhelmed, let us be overwhelmed with undaunted faces looking in the right direction. By the mercy of God may we be saved; and if saved how splendid it will be—no trouble, no trial, no indigestible beef and brick-tea: everything better than we could wish it, and complete joy.

‘All this is not imagination or rhetoric, but really before us; so, by the strength which Christ gives, let us go on to it. Pray for me. I pray for you; and if we don’t meet on earth, you know the trysting-place, “the right-hand side.”’

It can readily be seen that, under conditions of the kind sketched in this letter, time was not likely to hang heavily on his hands. Interviews like the following were held from time to time, and were not only encouraging and hopeful but reacted strongly upon his own heart and brain:—

‘This afternoon (Sabbath, November 24), I met Toobshing Baier in the dispensary of the London Mission Hospital. At first I could not remember the man. The face I knew. After a time his name came out without, I flatter myself, his perceiving

that I was fishing for it. He was most anxious to see the doctor's medical instruments and appliances. After he had seen quite a number of these, he came to my room, and we sat down for a talk which lasted nearly from 5 to 7 o'clock. He began by reading a part of the rough draft of the new translation of St. Matthew in Mongolian, which happened to be lying on my table. He suggested that in place of "prophet," a word which has been transferred bodily, we should use _juoug beelikty_. He also remarked that our translation of "the foal of an ass" was not the thing, and gave the word he thought was right. He was accompanied by a young lama, who agreed with him in this suggestion. The lama seemed well up, read Mongolian as easily as Toobshing himself, and when Toobshing gave the Thibetan word for _juoug beelikty_, the lama looked over his shoulder, spied a book on a shelf, took it, found the place at once, and showed me the Thibetan and Mongolian side by side.

‘Shortly after this Toobshing set himself up and proposed questions and cases such as:

“Is hell eternal?

“Are all the heathen who have not heard the Gospel damned?

“If a man lives without sin, is he damned?

“If a man disregards Christ, but worships a supreme God in an indefinite way, is he saved or not?

“How can Christ save a man?

“If a man prays to Christ to save him morn and even, but goes on sinning meantime, how about him?

“If a man prays for a thing, does he get it?

“Do your unbelieving countrymen in England all go to hell?

“Are there prophets now?

“Is a new-born child a sinner?

“Is one man then punished for another’s fault?

“Has anybody died, gone to heaven or hell, and come back to report? [A Mongol has!]

“Did Buddha live?” and so forth.

[Answer, He lived, but did not do what is now said of him.]

“If so, how do you know that the account of Christ is not made up in the same way? Could not the disciples conspire to make the Gospels?

‘To these and all other questions I endeavoured to give proper answers; and this, our most delightful and profitable talk, lasted till there was just time for me to snatch a hasty meal before the usual service at 7.30 P.M.’

Discussions of this nature were calculated to deepen thought and to promote heart-searching on the part of the Christian worker. They also illustrate some of the special difficulties

which missionaries in China and India have to meet. With an elaborate religious ritual and literature, both Buddhist and Hindu can often, and do often, object against Christianity many of those, sometimes obvious, sometimes subtle, difficulties which the Gospel of Jesus Christ alone can remove, and which it removes by sanctifying and dominating the heart.

In February 1873 Gilmour visited Tientsin for the first time since he passed through it on his arrival in China. Here he took part in several readings, temperance meetings, and religious services. At one of the readings:—

‘One joke happened. I was asked to give a recitation at a penny reading for sailors. The piece was “The Execution of Montrose.” I got up in tragic style, said,

“Come hither, Evan Cameron,”

with the appropriate beckoning action, when a sailor in the middle of the audience responded to the call, pressed his way out of the passage, and was making for the platform. I could not stand this, so I uttered a yell, and rushed off to hide myself, and it was some time before the audience and speaker could compose themselves for a fresh start Next day we were told that the unfortunate sailor was beckoned to come hither from all parts of the ship.’

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.

'To-day (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,[3] 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 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 to-morrow. 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!'

[3] The son of the chief referred to on page 80, who had recently been killed by a fall from his horse.

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. —To-day 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. 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._—To-day 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, “Stupidier 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._—To-day 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 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 l. to 30 l.

‘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.

‘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 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 someone shall guide me?' meets the missionary of to-day, as it met Philip in the days of old. The practically unanimous opinion of the Shanghai Conference held in 1890 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 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, viz., 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 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 diarrh[oe]a, 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—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 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 diarrh[oe]a 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.

‘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 any one who even wanted to be a Christian; but by healing their diseases I have had opportunity to tell many of Jesus, the Great Physician.’

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 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.

No time was lost in the arrangements for Miss Prankard's departures 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. I 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 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 river side 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 trip 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 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 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 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 baptised 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 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.’

CHAPTER VI

‘IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN, IN PERILS OF RIVERS’

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 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 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 Christlike 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 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.

‘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 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.

[Illustration: A MONGOL ENCAMPMENT]

‘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 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 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 develope, 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 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 I one 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 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.

‘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.

‘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 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 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.’

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 is 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 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 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. Diarrh[oe]a 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 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 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 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.’

In the course of a subsequent tour in the same district, in 1880, he gives in his diary a sketch of a sermon preached by Liu, his

Chinese helper, one which may be taken as a specimen of the best class of address given by a converted Chinaman to his fellow-countrymen.

‘Liu’s subject was from Revelation, “Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” He went into an elaborate detail about the use of water, washing, laying the dust in a room being swept out, (la Bunyan) making a sinking sand hard and good for a cart and man to travel on. Finally, he got to a couple of good stories about a man who got drunk and had his face blackened, so that when he came home his own father did not know him and would not let him in, and when he saw himself accidentally in a mirror he did not know himself. His drunkenness had completely changed his appearance and voice even.

‘So God made us in His own image, but sin has terribly changed us. Purified by the Holy Ghost we may again be like ourselves and God.

‘The service lasted about two hours and ten minutes. The story parts of the sermon were very effective.’

A later entry in the diary runs: ‘Had service. Preached “Jesus saves,” the sermon for the heathen of that name.’ One who often heard him preach in China gives the following estimate of his power and method in delivering his message:—

‘As a preacher Gilmour was most unconventional. His sermons were direct talks, without any attempt at rhetoric. They were plentifully illustrated, largely from events in his own experience. Laughable allusions or quaint ways of putting

things were frequently used. While there was not much attractive in the manner of the preacher, the directness of his remark and his evident earnestness always made his sermons appreciated and enjoyed. The Chinese were always glad to hear him, and words he used to speak are often referred to.’

Writing on one occasion to a friend in England being educated for the Christian ministry, who had just taken one of the higher degrees at the London University, he said:—

‘I don’t think our work is so much unlike, after all. You witness for Christ, so do I; and though you are in a Christian country and I in a heathen land, human nature is human nature, and not so different as might be supposed. You may, pray you may, see more fruit of your work than I do, but your trials, and difficulties, and temptations will be, no doubt are, pretty much the same as mine. May the Lord help you and bless you now and for ever! I hope He will help you to have ever a heart ready to preach simply the simple Gospel to your hearers, half of whom, perhaps, know almost nothing of salvation, though they have been listening to sermons about it all their lives, and would not know in the least to which hand to turn if they were aroused and became anxious to be saved. I’ll give you a text, which I think peculiarly suitable for you, now a graduate. Isaiah 1. 4—”The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.” I like to dwell on this text. Learning should not make deep sermons, hard to be understood; on the contrary, it should be all employed to make the road simple and clear. Forgive me for exhorting you so, but I can’t refrain from it when I think of the many learned men I know at home

and here who employ their learning in giving learned sermons, not in making the way simple and plain.’

The sermon referred to in the extract quoted above from the diary is based on Matt. i. 21. It was never written out; but the notes of it lie before us, and we quote them as an illustration of his way of addressing both Chinese and English audiences. It may interest the reader to endeavour to make out from it the line of thought, and any who may have heard him preach or speak will find it easy to recall how he preached it.

‘Matt. i. 21. ‘He shall save people from their sins.’

‘Talk to a man, he admits he is sinner; by-and-by he will break off and become good.

‘He does not really know what sin is. Egypt!

‘It is a disease; if you get it can you leave it off? Your blood is tainted.

‘It is a fire; once light it, you can’t quench it, it smoulders and breaks out afresh.

‘It is an evil root, evil weed, can easy sow, not extirpate.

‘Sin is like the current above Niagara.

‘It becomes a habit. Indulgence makes habit grow.

‘It is like a spider; one thread after another binds up a fly.

‘Such is sin—murder, robbery, theft, adultery, uncleanness, lying, covetousness, hatred, anger, malice, want of love to God or man.

‘Many of these sins you not accused of, but you have sin: sin is fatal, can you free yourself? _Jesus is to do it._

‘Disease, fire, root, current, habit, fly. _The man cannot free himself: Jesus must set him free._

‘Not only from _Hell_, but from sin.

‘Suppose you were freed only from Hell, and transported to Heaven, could you be happy? Who would be your companions?

‘Ignorant (wicked) man in company of learned (holy).

‘_A Tientsin vagrant_ became chair-bearer; had clothes, etc., but only for a day; he was soon naked again.

‘Christ does not transport to Heaven only.

‘_Disease._—Not die from it; He cures it.

‘_Fire._—Not consumed by it; He quenches it.

‘_Root_ of evil; He clears from the ground.

‘_Niagara._—He lifts you out of the current on to an island.

‘_Habit._—He sets you free from it.

‘_Spider’s fly._—He not only takes from the spider; but He sets it free from the toils.

‘_Jesus gives_ second nature; you are born again.

‘But upon one _condition_, your consent. The _disease_ is severe: you must obey doctor; if you do not submit to operation; not take bitter drugs; then he does not heal.

‘_Lead_ a man to Peking: not come, not follow: leave him: lead to heaven, paths of holiness not follow, not reach.

‘Has Christ saved you? If yes, visible to self and others. He is not only an object of respect, admiration: He is the doctor into whose hands you put your soul for treatment.

‘_Two brothers_, Kite, Loe, Pet Dog.

‘_John of Hankow’s Liu_, see Chronicle; dead _v._ alive; sick (of fever) _v._ whole. Is it last time? Mongols feel queer.

‘_Missionaries._ Mongol doctor who had not courage to treat himself.

‘_S. S. Teacher_: Paul: be a castaway,

‘Christ Matt. i. 21-23.

‘Any religion good enough. No: no religion breaks bondage of sin: go down to death in sin’s slavery. Only Jesus can save from sin. _Ask, and He’ll do it._’

During the winters in Peking he still used every effort to get at the Mongols frequenting the capital.

‘The Mongols who visit Peking connect themselves with two great centres. “The Outside Lodging,” which is about a mile or more north of the north wall of Peking, and is also called the “Halha Lodging,” because it is the great resort of the Northern Mongols, and the “Inside Lodging,” which is near the inside of the south wall of the Manchu City of Peking, is situated close behind the English Legation, and is also called the “Cold Lodging;” this name being probably due to the fact that in the open space in this “Inside Lodging” a good many Mongols camp out in their tents, in place of hiring courts and rooms from the Chinese. These are the two great _centres_ for Mongols in Peking. Many of them lodge in the immediate neighbourhood, and even those who lodge in other parts of the city frequent these two centres; so that, if any one wants to know whether or not any individual Mongol has come to Peking, he seeks him at one or other of these marts.

‘In the winter of 1879-80 I set up a book-stall, with a Chinaman to care for it, at the Outside Lodging, going myself, as a rule, every second day. This winter I followed the example of the pedlars, and, hanging two bags of books from my shoulders, hunted the Mongols out, going not only to the trading places, but in and out among the lanes where they lodged, visiting the Outside Lodging first and the Inside Lodging later in the day. The number of Mongols outside the city became latterly so small that it was not visited very often; but during the Chinese eleventh and the first part of the twelfth month, the number of Mongols to be met with at the Inside

Lodging was fair, and the number of books disposed of altogether, both outside and inside the city, amounted to seven hundred and fourteen.

‘In many cases the Mongols, before buying, and not unfrequently after buying, would insist on having the book read, supposing that they got more for their money when they not only had the book, but had me let them hear its contents. Of course I was only too glad to have the opportunity of reading, which readily changed to opportunity for talking; and in this way, from time to time, little groups of Mongols would gather round and listen to short addresses on the main doctrines of Christianity. Several men whom I accosted seemed familiar with the name of Jesus, and had some knowledge of Christianity. Some bought the books eagerly; some not only did not buy themselves, but exhorted others not to buy; some openly spoke against Christianity; but a great many of those who listened to an address or took part in a conversation evinced interest in the subjects spoken of, and remarked that salvation by another bearing our sin was a reasonable doctrine. As the purchasers of these books hailed from all parts of Mongolia, the tracts thus put into their hands will reach to even remote localities in the west, north, and east, and my prayer is that the reading of them may be the beginning of what shall lead to a saving knowledge of the truth in some minds. Hoping for some good result, I had my address stamped on many of the books, to enable such as might wish to learn more to know where to come.

‘In some cases, Mongols wishing to buy books had no money, but were willing to give goods instead; and thus it happened that I sometimes made my way home at night with a

miscellaneous collection of cheese, sour-curd, butter and millet cake and sheep's fat, representing the produce of part of the day's sales.'

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, 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, so that he can return guiding an army? Is he, as a wizard, carrying off the good luck of the country in his note-book? 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 good-will 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 Mongolia; but the manner of life and customs of the Mongols are such that it is useless to attempt to cure it. Cure it to-day, it is contracted again to-morrow. 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 expanse 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 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 the galvanic battery, and it is rather curious that almost every Mongol who sees it and tries 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 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 any one who approached them in no other character but that of a teacher of Christianity.’

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 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 tufted grass, stretching away to huge black hills in the distance, and Tartars on camels, Tartars on horses, Tartars on 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. It 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 any one who, perhaps from early neglect, does not perceive this truth, our judgment will seem erroneous; but to any one 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 *littrateur* at all. But Heaven, which has denied him many 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 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, sheep’s 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 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!’

[Illustration: A MONGOL CAMEL CART
(_From a Native Sketch_)]

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 have been sold during the nine years which have passed since the publication of the first edition.

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 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 considered suitable for 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 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 the Gospel blessings which he seemed to think were the special property of what he called "The Church"; walked on to 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 _tte—tte_ 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 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 suspicions 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 was that the results of his long journeys and of his various missionary enterprises had been apparently so few.’

It was certain that James Gilmour’s power as a speaker would be utilised for the great event of the London Missionary Society’s year, the annual meeting at Exeter Hall. This fell, in 1883, on May 10, and he was the last speaker. This involved waiting about two hours and a half for his speech, and corresponding exhaustion on the part of the audience. But none who were present will forget the rapid way in which he secured the attention of his hearers, and the ease with which he held it to the close. He chose to speak of work in China, rather than in Mongolia; the recent publication of his book helping among other reasons to determine this choice. Part of the speech deserves reproduction here, because it outlines very sharply the work that engaged much of his time while resident in Peking, and because nowhere else can such a realistic, sparkling, and lifelike picture of the preaching work of the Peking mission, and consequently more or less of all preaching in great Chinese cities, be found.

‘In Peking we have three chapels. A chapel there is merely a Chinese shop, put into decent repair, and a signboard stuck

over the top. The Chinese are very fond of giving themselves very high names. You will come to a man sitting in a little box scarcely big enough for himself to turn round in, and if you read his sign, it is some flowing name about a hall; it may be the "Hall of Continual Virtue," or something of that kind, or the "Hall of the Five Happinesses." So our title above our chapel just runs in the native idiomatic style, and it is the "Gospel Hall." Inside there is not very much to see. The counter has been cleared away and the shelves, and, in place of the mud, a brick floor has been put down; and then there are forms arranged for the sitters, and there is a low platform for the speaker. I do not know how it happens, but it does happen, that up in the left-hand corner of the chapel—and it is always the left-hand corner—there is a table and two chairs, and on that table there is a teapot and set of cups, because in China everything is done with tea. You must always begin in that way. These chapels are open six days in the week in the afternoon.

'Now, supposing you come in at the door, the natural thing for the missionary seems to be just to walk up to this table and sit down, and then the next thing is to get a congregation. Sometimes there is no difficulty about getting it, if it happens to be a fair day or there is a crowd in the streets. They simply pour in: but the tide goes different ways sometimes, and does not pour in always like that. I want to give you just a fair, square, honest idea of what the thing is. Sometimes the congregation will not come in, and sometimes, after a little while, one man looks in at the door and sees a foreigner, and he is off. He has seen quite enough and does not want to see any more; and if you were to ask him what he had seen, he would not say he had seen a foreigner; no, he would say he had

seen “a foreign devil.” And, friends, you would not be very much astonished that some of those ignorant men coming from the country are alarmed when they see a foreigner, if you could only imagine the terrible lies that they circulate about us there; about how we take out people’s hearts for the purposes of magic, and steal people’s eyes to make photographic chemicals, and administer medicines to bewitch them generally. I say that, if the first man who comes to a chapel on an afternoon is a man who has heard these things, you cannot be astonished that all you see of that man is his back and his pigtail as he goes away.

‘Another man sometimes comes—a bolder man, and he comes in, and the most natural thing for him seems to be to walk up to the table and sit down on the other side, and there you and he are a pair. The proper thing is to pour him out a cup of tea: that is etiquette, and the etiquette seems to be that he should not drink it. Sometimes, after the service begins, I see the native preacher come slyly up, as if he did not mean anything at all; and he walks up to the teapot, and lifts the lid quite quietly, and slips that tea back into the pot again, and puts on the lid and warms it up, and it is ready for the next man who comes.

‘If you get into conversation with one man, the congregation is, for the most part, practically secured, because, though a Chinaman is very much afraid of being spoken to directly by a foreigner, most Chinamen are very curious to overhear any conversation that may be carried on; so if you are speaking to him, in comes another man to listen, and if you can get other men to come in and listen over each other’s backs, very soon more come in than the original speaker cares to overhear his private conversation; and when that step is reached, it is time

to go to the platform and ask the hearers to sit down and begin the regular service. Sometimes nobody comes in, and then you have to try something else, and that is to go and sit down a little nearer the door, and sometimes, in that way, gradually a few people come in. But then in Peking sometimes there is a great north-west wind blowing; and I think that is about the hardest thing on a man's congregation before he gets it, because, when the weather is unfavourable, there are not many people about, and so we have to adopt another plan. We do not go on to the streets, but inside the chapel the native preacher and I do our best to sing a hymn. I say do our best, because sometimes these native preachers do not succeed in singing very well; however, we succeed in making a noise, and that is the thing that draws. The people look in, and see what they suppose to be a foreigner and a native chanting Buddhist prayers. In they come; they have not seen that before, and they sit down, and, as soon as the hymn is through, we have the opportunity of telling them the contents of the hymn; and there you have your sermon ready to your hand.

‘But suppose you have got your congregation, it is not all smooth-sailing water. Sometimes there are interruptions. Sometimes, just when you have the ear of your audience, all at once a tremendous row happens just outside the door, and the congregation jump to their feet and rush out to see what is going on. I could have told them if they had only asked me. No doubt, some unwise Chinaman, in place of coming straight in and sitting down, stood on the outskirts of the crowd on tiptoe. A city thief coming along says, “Ah, there is my man,” and he walks quietly up to him with a pair of sharp scissors, cuts off his tobacco pouch, and goes off with it. Of course, as soon as the man misses the pouch, his first impulse is to grab his next

neighbour; that neighbour remonstrates, and then a fight commences.

‘Sometimes a funeral passes, and that is almost as serious an interruption as a fight; because, although a Chinaman does not think much about his soul after he dies, he thinks a vast deal about his dead body, and, in order to be perfectly sure that he will not be cheated by the undertaker, he buys his coffin before he is sick, and sees that he has a good bargain. And so, having a good coffin, he wants a good funeral; and it is said some men spend nearly half of their fortune in having a grand procession when they are carried to their grave. When one of these enormous funerals, with a procession sometimes a quarter of a mile long, comes by, it is a very bad job for your congregation. Out they go to have a look at it.

‘Then the interruption is sometimes another thing, and this last one is a more difficult case to settle. When one of the upper ten thousand in China has a marriage, they want to have a great exhibition; and after they have bought the furniture, they get and hire a great many men, and have them dressed to carry that furniture in procession along the streets and show it to their neighbours. First comes a great wardrobe, and then a little cupboard, a washstand, a square table, and all sorts of furniture. Now when that comes, what are you to do? They have been at the expense of paying for an exhibition for their neighbours to see, and they feel that it would be unneighbourly if they did not step to the door and look out and see the things carried past, and there goes your congregation. Sometimes unusual interruptions happen. I remember once a woman put her head in at the door. Women do not come to these chapels often—I am very glad they do not. That woman put her head in

at the door, and I saw danger. She glared round the place, and then she spied one man, and she shouted out something at him: “Come out of that!” and, friends, he came out of that, in a big hurry, too. He disturbed us very considerably. It was not the woman so much as the man—we all pitied him as he went out.

‘Those audiences are very mixed, and they are very curious to your eyes. Sometimes I see those audiences, most of whom we do not know anything about, listening to what I have to tell them, quite as still as you are now—their pipes out, the smoke cleared away. They lean forward and listen just as still as audiences in this country sometimes listen when the preacher, in an interesting discourse, is coming up to a division of his subject. And, friends, let me tell you what it is that makes them listen best of all—it is the central doctrine of the truth of Christianity. When we come to tell them of how Christ left the surroundings of heaven, and came to spend so many years in such very poor, unsympathetic company on earth (and that is a subject that a missionary sometimes can talk feelingly upon when he has been in a foreign country for some time), when we can tell them that, and then come to the last and greatest part of all: how Christ allowed Himself, for love of man, to be nailed to the cross, and not only that, but kept in Him that gentle spirit that made Him pray for those who were putting Him to death—oh, friends, when we come to that and tell them of it—I know that a Chinaman is degraded, corrupt, sensual, material, but he has a human heart; and when you can get at the heart, it responds to the story of the Cross. We want to do something in drawing the net, and so, on this table in the corner, there is a pile of books, and as it gets towards the time to close, I say to the friends, “Now, you will soon be going away to your evening meal; and as I am a foreigner, probably

you have not understood all that I have said;” and then I say, “Now, before you go, there are a number of books upon this table, where you will find the whole of this subject put down in black and white; will you just come up and have a look at the books before you go?” We want, if possible, to establish a point of contact with them, and so to get a little private conversation, as it were. If you ask them to come up and look at a book, and they ask the price of it, you have an opportunity of talking to them, and some of these men not only buy the books, but they read them and come back for others.

‘Now, how does the matter stand? These heathen have been in our chapel, and we have taken the opportunity of putting some of the truth into their hearts; but I know a good part, much, it may be, of what the man has heard when he goes out—well, it is stolen away, or it is trampled under foot; but some part of it remains.

‘And now I can come to the practical part. I have not been trying to entertain you, but I have been trying to interest you, and what I want to impress upon you is this: after those men have left the chapel you can do as much for their conversion as we can do in China. I want you to pray for the conversion of these men to whom we in Peking, and others in other parts of the world, are the means of communicating these truths of Christ. I believe it is not only the earnestness of the missionary that is going to produce results, but it is your earnestness here. We are your agents, and I believe, fervently, we shall have results there in direct proportion to the measure of your earnestness here. I believe I am speaking to the right people when I ask you to pray. Unprayed for, I feel very much as if a diver were sent down to the bottom of a river with no air to

breathe, or as if a fireman were sent up to a blazing building and held an empty hose; I feel very much as a soldier who is firing blank cartridge at an enemy, and so I ask you earnestly to pray that the Gospel may take saving and working effect on the minds of those men to whose notice it has been introduced by us. Not long ago, at the close of a local anniversary, when we had been having a meeting, as we were going home, three of us got off a tram-car—two ministers of the locality and myself—and, as we were walking along, one said: “Ah, Gilmour, it is all the same over again; it is just the old thing; you missionaries come, and you have an anniversary, and the people’s earnestness seems to be stirred up, and you ask their prayers, and it looks as if you would get them, but,” he said, “you go away, and the thing passes by and is just left where it was before.” I do not think that was quite correct. I think my brother was labouring under a temporary fit of the blues, and I was very glad to find his companion said it was not quite correct. What I want is this, to go back to my work feeling that there are those behind us who are praying earnestly that God’s Spirit would work effectually in the hearts of those to whom we have the privilege of preaching. If you pray earnestly you can but work earnestly, and then you will also give earnestly; and I do not think we can be too earnest in the matter for which Christ was so much in earnest that He laid down His own life.’

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 1 the return voyage to China began, and Peking was reached on November 14.

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 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.

[Illustration: A CHINESE MULE LITTER]

‘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, 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, &c.; 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 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.

[Illustration: JAMES GILMOUR EQUIPPED FOR HIS WALKING EXPEDITION IN MONGOLIA IN FEBRUARY 1884]

‘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 tea-pot. 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 tea-pot 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. 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 inspiring 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 seen, the most difficult to get private conversation with any one. 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 I 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 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 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 Christ. 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 Jaugg 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_.’[4]

[4] Fire in the centre of the tent.

‘_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 A.M. 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 T Sheng Mn. 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: Jan. 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 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 any one 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 every one, 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 any one 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, 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, &c," 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 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 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 doubts 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.[5]

[5] Fu is now (1892) an evangelist, and Jui Wu a dispenser, in the Chi Chou Mission.

‘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 Ss[ü] 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 to-morrow 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.

‘Hss as they were.[6]

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

‘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 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 whole-heartedly 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 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 run-down, 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 to-day 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 to-day. 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 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._—To-day, 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, &c.'

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, 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, “T_o 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 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.

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.

‘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 to-morrow. 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. 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 li, 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.

[Illustration: MAP ILLUSTRATING JAMES GILMOUR’S LABOURS IN EASTERN MONGOLIA]

‘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 Chng

Tz[u] 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 friend and made two journeys to other places, but Ta Chng Tz[u] 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 Chng Tz[u] 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 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.

‘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, &c., 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 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 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.

‘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 diarrh[oe]a and dysentery. I was at Ta Chng Tz[u]. 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 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 Chng Tz[u] 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 Chng Tz[u] 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 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 Chng Tz[u] 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 Chng Tz[u] seeking me. He needed and asked my help, so next day I started for Ta Chng Tz[u], 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 Chng Tz[u]. I was blue. The fever of July, the defection of the Mongol donkey man, who failed to come for us, the diarrh[oe]a, which on the journey changed to dysentery, being baffled in attempting to find suitable quarters in Ta Chng Tz[u], 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, “To-night 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 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 Chng Tz[u], 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 another attack of dysentery if the same results would follow.

‘The profession of the other adherent at Ta Chng Tz[]u], 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, &c. 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 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, 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 li 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.’

Into this controversy as a mere discussion we have no desire to enter. But to enable the reader to know Mr. Gilmour exactly as he was it deserves more than a passing reference. The following may be taken as an example of many letters that passed on this subject.

‘I start perhaps on Tuesday. Pardon me for expressing myself on one matter—the Chinese teetotal business. You and some of my colleagues seem to me as if I could not move you on this question. It is a great grief to me. I think you are not right in your ideas about this. I suppose you can beat me in argument. I am still more than ever convinced that teetotalism is right and needful for the success of native Christian life in China. We have some painful instances here of that among the natives—specially two—one of the two hailing from Tientsin.

‘I don’t know your Tientsin Church history, but if it is anything like ours here you would find men standing nowhere almost as to Christian character, who but for drink and its concomitants might, humanly speaking, have shone. And yet these are men to get whom out of sin Christ died—brethren, for whom Christ died.

‘Pardon me again when I take a short cut to what I want to say:
“_I believe were Christ here now as a missionary amongst us
He would be an enthusiastic teetotaller and a non-smoker._”

‘Tobacco is comparatively a harmless matter, but it is not so
unimportant as it seems to us foreigners. Whisky should go,
and I feel that the Chinese would be quite ready, if led, to turn
both whisky and tobacco out together. They are born brothers
in China, _useless_, and _acknowledged_ to be such; harmful
as far as they are anything, and comparatively expensive.

‘I would like to see you start in your church an anti-tobacco
and whisky society; voluntary, of course, in a church
established as yours on the old lines. Though I stand alone, I
believe the flowing tide is with me.

‘Wishing you many souls in 1887, and eager that no minor
difference of opinion should hinder our prayers.

‘Yours I-hardly-know-how-to-say-what,
‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

In the _Chinese Recorder_, for which he had been in the habit
of writing for many years, he published a paper in which he set
forth with great clearness and fulness his views on this
important matter. It deserves a place in the story of his life
because in it he has sketched, as no one else could, himself,
and some of his later methods of evangelistic address.

‘In December, 1885, in a district of North China new to me, I
found myself preaching to a small crowd of Chinese and

Mongols in a small market town. I was in a lane leading on to the main street. At my back was a mud wall, in front and at both sides was the audience, within hearing was the main street, above, a bright sun made the place warm and cheerful. After listening a while the audience wanted to know how good seasons could be secured. To the truths I had been preaching they had listened with respect and fair attention, but at the first opportunity for speaking they wanted to know how to get a good harvest.

‘At first I paid little attention to this question, but after a little while it was asked again, and that by several men in succession, and I soon found that the people of the place had little room for anything else in their thoughts. There was good reason for it too. Their last harvest had been a poor one. Three-tenths was about the yield. They too with their three-tenths were comparatively well off. Some distance from them the yield had not been more than two-tenths, and a little beyond that again, there were fields which had been sown, but never reaped. There had been nothing to reap. Nothing had grown. I passed some of these fields afterwards and saw them. Was it wonderful then that the main thought in their minds should be the harvest failure, and that they should be mainly anxious to know how to secure a good season next year? Looking at my audience I saw that nine-tenths of them were poorly clad. Nearly one-half of them were quite insufficiently clothed, and many were in garments suited to summer weather only. I was in a sheepskin coat and felt shoes, and even thus was not too warm, and could not help thinking how cold they must be, in their torn clothes and ordinary shoes. In addition to this they seemed hungry. I dare say perhaps one-half of them were in actual suffering from deficiency of food.

‘Taking these things into consideration, I did not regard their great and often-repeated question, “How about the harvest?” as impertinent, and set myself to answer it. When the question was again asked I replied by asking another, namely, “_Do you think you deserve good harvests?_” This question usually made them stare and ask, “Why should not we deserve good harvests?” and I would reply, “In the first place, because of that _tobacco pipe in your mouth_.” A laugh of incredulity would usually pass round the audience, but when done laughing, and asked to consider the folly of spending money buying a pipe and tobacco when the smoker was shivering in his rags, and hungry, and especially when asked what was the good of smoking, they laughed no more. When pressed to say where the tobacco came from, they would admit that the cultivation of tobacco took up no small proportion of their better-class land, and when pressed to say how much land was given up to tobacco cultivation, they would admit, what did not seem to have occurred to them before, that the amount of land given up to tobacco cultivation was very large. How large it was I had no conception till the following summer, when, walking round the suburbs, I would look over the low mud walls of their gardens, and be amazed at the expanse of land covered with the great, broad green leaf of the flourishing tobacco plant.

‘Putting these things before my audience, they would admit that the cultivation of tobacco was a misuse of a large portion of their better land, that in cultivating and using tobacco they were doing what was wrong, and hindering heaven from feeding them. Heaven had given them good land and good rains for the purpose of growing food. The growth of tobacco

was defeating heaven's purpose, and as long as they did so, what face had they to ask for good seasons? To take good land and plant it with tobacco, with what face could they ask heaven to send rain, seeing that if rain came, what grew would not be grain but tobacco, a thing which they themselves to a man admitted was no use at all? And so my audience would admit that as preliminary to getting or even expecting a good harvest was the discontinuance of the use and growth of tobacco.

‘In the course of a year and a half of outdoor preaching in streets and at fairs, and private conversation with individuals, I never met an audience that defended tobacco as useful, and do not think I met more than three individuals who had anything to say in its defence. Almost everyone, smokers included, admitted its uselessness. Many do not seem to have thought the cultivation and use of it any harm, or having any bearing on the question of food supply and good harvests; they usually regarded it as simply a piece of extravagance on their own part, which had no bearing on anything or anybody beyond themselves. But when pointed out to them they readily admit that tobacco cultivation lessens the production of grain, and as readily admit that the wrongdoing in this misuse of land is likely to further harm the harvest by offending heaven into being unwilling to send rain. I myself never used to look on smoking as any great evil, till led into this district, and thus forced to study the subject. In England I had never seen tobacco grown. A smoker there spends a few coppers, and smokes; what harm does he do? Does not he increase trade and help the revenue? His smoking seems to harm no one but himself. Such were my thoughts. But in this district I see the cultivation of tobacco limiting the supply of grain, thus raising the price of food, and consequently making men go hungry. In

addition I see men, women, and sometimes children, in rags and hungry even, with pipes and tobacco, and when they complain of heaven not supplying them with enough food to eat, it would be less than honest not to point out to them that the fault lies not with heaven, but with themselves, and that part at least of the scarcity of grain they experience is due to the cultivation and use of tobacco, which throughout that whole region is very excessive.

‘I have dwelt thus at length on the tobacco question, not because it is the most important of the three things here spoken of, but because many good brethren have not been able to see with me on this point. They feel, as I used to do before I went to that region, that tobacco smoking is a small affair, not worth raising into prominence or the region of conscience or Christian duty at all. These brethren have not seen how things work. I feel sure that almost any missionary placed as I was would have done exactly what I have done, taken a stand against this excessive growth and more excessive use of tobacco, for, not content with what they grow, they actually import quantities of it. Tobacco is not the greatest cause of poverty and hunger in the district, but it is a much greater factor in poverty than would at first be supposed. But for its use in that district a large number of men, women, and children, who are deficiently clothed and fed, would be warm and sleek. Christ taught men to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” It must be wrong to make hundreds of men, women, and children go half clad and half fed, simply that eighty or ninety per cent. of the adults of that district may indulge in tobacco, a thing, according to their own admission, utterly without use, and for the continuance of which they can

give no reason, further than that they have acquired the habit and find it difficult to give it up.

‘A more serious question, however, is the whisky. In going into that region I was amazed at the quantity of whisky used. I used to lodge in an inn and take my meals in an eating-house. There, twice a day, I had an opportunity of studying the drinking habits of the country. Almost every man who entered the eating-house first called for a whisky warmer. Supplied with that, he would go out and buy his whisky, coming back he would set it in the charcoal fire to warm, and then slowly drink it from the tiny wine cups common in China, inviting me to join him, and wondering at a man who could evidently afford it, not treating himself to two ounces of whisky, and wondering still more when he learned that I did not use tobacco. It would be an exaggeration, but not a great exaggeration, to say that every man who entered the eating-house began his meal by drinking whisky. In replying to the question put by my street audiences as to how they were to get good harvests, I would ask them, after finishing the tobacco question, “How about your whisky drinking?” Frequently they would anticipate me in this, and say, “If tobacco is wrong, how about whisky?” To convince them of the wrong of whisky was never difficult. To ask good harvests from heaven, then take grain given by heaven for food, and turn it into whisky, they did not need me to tell them this was wrong. And there in that district it is a very crying wrong. The quantity used is immense. Not only does it seem so to me, but natives from other parts of China are struck by the excessive use of it.

‘The first time I travelled in the district, I was struck by the manner in which they described the size and amount of trade

of towns about which I made inquiries. Such and such a place had or had not a distillery and pawnshop. Such and such a town had so many distilleries, and so many pawnshops. One travelling about the country soon notes that nearly every imposing trading establishment with grand premises seen from afar is either a distillery or a pawnshop, or both combined. The bank notes current among the people are issued, at but a small percentage, by distilleries and pawnshops. The first crop to ripen in the district is barley, and that, the natives will tell you, all goes to the distillery. On the road you will meet large carts drawn by six or seven mules. The load is grain, and of these carts a large number are owned by distilleries, and go round the country collecting grain, from which to brew whisky. One of the first things to be heard in the morning after daylight, in a quiet market town, is a peculiar beating of a wooden drum. Ask what it means, and you will be told it is such and such a distillery calling its hands to breakfast. Ask how many hands they have, and you may find that one establishment has some sixty or seventy men who eat their food! The whisky trade is simply enormous. It is out of all proportion to every other trade. The women as a rule do not drink, the men do all the drinking—the males I should say, for not a few boys acquire the habit of taking whisky to their meals long before they can be called men. A very few men do not use whisky at all. The poorer agricultural labourers drink it only when they can get it, and just as much or as little as they can get. Many men take regularly two ounces—Chinese ounces—to each meal. Many take more. Many well-to-do people drink half a catty per day. Others drink a whole catty.[7] Some drink a catty and a half a day. A small proportion of the male population find drinking a greater necessity than eating. These are usually elderly men, but as I write I can think of two men, both young, and both

Mongols, one a priest, the other a layman, who have arrived at this advanced stage of whisky drinking.

[7] A Chinese weight equal to one pound and a third.

‘This excessive use of whisky has impoverished many families, and has demoralised many men. It has caused many quarrels, and given rise to many lawsuits. The evil caused by whisky is apparent to all, but custom requires that friends should be honoured by being offered whisky, business should be transacted over whisky, and the general saying is that without whisky nothing can be done. A farmer, for example, adding a few rooms to his buildings must supply his masons and joiners with whisky. Thus in universal use, the quantity consumed is immense. The quantity of grain used in the distilleries is almost beyond computation, and I don’t remember ever meeting a Chinaman who did not admit that to distil whisky was to do evil. They ask me how to get good harvests. I tell them; “Give up abusing the grain you have got, before you ask for more. If heaven sees you taking a large part of your superior land for raising the useless tobacco, and taking a very large proportion of the grain sent you as food, and using it not to eat, nor to feed animals, but distilling it into the hurtful whisky, do you think heaven, seeing all this waste going on, is likely to hear your petitions and increase the supply of what you now waste so large a proportion? If you bought food for your child, and he ate only half and threw the other half to the pig, would you be likely to buy him more just then, even though he might say he was hungry?” This reasoning seems quite satisfactory and convincing to them, and never fails to secure their expressed assent.

‘As to opium I never find it necessary to say much. All admit it to be only and wholly bad. Yet the quantity grown in the district is immense. In the early spring the very first movement of cultivation is the irrigation and working of the opium land, and at the season nearly all the best land blazes with bloom of the poppy. It is a sight to see the country people going to the markets with the “_milk_” in bowls and basins, and the buyers and sellers of it riding along, each with a weighing-balance stuck in his belt. Government restriction there is none, the duty imposed is not very heavy, and public opinion raises no voice against it. It was originally grown, say the natives, so as to keep money from going out of the district in buying imported opium, but the more it was grown the more it was used, and now the quantity raised and smoked is immense. There is a small proportion of farmers who have good land, suitable for growing opium, but who do not grow it. But these men are few, and as a general rule the very best pieces of land are set apart for the cultivation of opium. The common conscience of the people tells them this is a wrong thing. When therefore they ask how to get a good harvest, they themselves acknowledge that the reply is just, which says, “First leave off the waste of heaven’s grace involved in the growth and manufacture of opium, whisky, and tobacco, and then, and not till then, will it be reasonable for you to ask heaven for more bountiful harvests.”

‘In connection with all this, there is another fact that must not be forgotten. Drinkers of whisky, and smokers, especially of opium, the better the year is, the more they indulge. In a poor year they use less whisky and opium; the better the year, and the cheaper tobacco, whisky, and opium are, the more they use, so that in place of making a proper return to heaven for a good

year, they only take the opportunity afforded them of running deeper into waste and wrong-doing. Is this the way to get better harvests? Considering the excessive growth and consumption of tobacco and opium, and the excessive manufacture and use of whisky, what could any honest, straightforward man say to the people, when they earnestly asked how they were to get good harvests, but “_Repent, and cease this great waste_”? And thus from no deliberate plan of mine, but from the plain leading of circumstances, it came to pass that I felt compelled to call upon the inhabitants of the district to lay aside the use of not only opium but also of whisky and tobacco, as one of the first steps toward worshipping the true God. Many friends have demurred to my making teetotalism an essential of Christianity, and many more have still more strongly demurred to my taking such a pronounced stand against the use of tobacco. The position of my friends is exactly the position I held myself before going into that region, but after going to that region and seeing just how things were, no other course seemed open to me, but to demand in all who wanted to do right the abandonment of the whole three; and I am convinced that almost any other missionary placed in the same circumstances would have taken the same stand.

‘This position too commends itself to the native mind, and the native mind, quite apart from me, and before my going into the district, had already risen up in protest against these abuses, and, in some parts of the country there, the Tsai li ti sect boasts not a few members. The main practical doctrine of this sect is, _Yen chiu pu tung_—abstinence from tobacco, whisky, and opium. The very existence of this sect, and its flourishing condition there, is a plain indication of what serious-minded

natives felt about the excessive use of these three things. Friends say that I am putting this self-righteousness in place of faith in Christ and the practice of higher duties. I do nothing of the sort. Beginning with the Chinaman where I find him, and answering the questions which he insists on asking first, I appeal to him to give up what he admits to be wrongdoing, sin (_tsao nieh_), as the first step in ceasing to do evil learning to do well, and coming into right relationship with God through Christ. Some friends are much alarmed lest this should lead to self-righteousness. There is no danger of that. The danger lies all the other way. To leave Christians drinking whisky and smoking tobacco in that region, would be to preach forgiveness of sin through Christ to men who were still going on in the practice of what their conscience told them was sin, and all must admit that this would never do. The condition of things in that region is such that I have no hesitation in saying that a man, to be honest in obeying God by refraining from what is wrong, must throw up his connexion with these three things, tobacco, whisky, opium.

‘In _that region_. It will be noticed that I have carefully confined my remarks to the state of things in _that region_. _That region_ is peculiar in producing within its own bounds almost all that is necessary for life and luxury even. It is peculiar too in having just exactly as many inhabitants as it can support, no more, no less. When the population increases too much it overflows into Manchuria. When the population is less than the full complement, it is instantly replenished by fresh arrivals from the South. The production of tobacco, whisky, and opium, not only reduces a large proportion of the inhabitants from comfort to misery, but also reduces sensibly the number of inhabitants. But for these three things many

more men could find a living within the bounds of the district Is not that little district an epitome of the world? Is what is true of that district not true of the whole world? Opium is a bad thing anywhere and everywhere. About that there need be no debate. Whisky and tobacco reduce the comforts and the number of the population there—is their effect not the same on the world in general? Is it not true that but for tobacco and whisky there would be food and clothes for a much larger population? And if so, do not tobacco and whisky take the bread out of men’s mouths and the clothes off their backs? And if so, has not every smoker and drinker a part in this sin? Christians pray, “_Give us this day our daily bread._” Does not consistency require them to desist from defeating this prayer by smoking and drinking, and thus reducing the amount of the total production of the necessaries of life?

‘Tobacco seems harmless. It is less harmful than opium and whisky by a long way. But its production sensibly reduces the supply of grain and cotton, and thus hinders the feeding of the hungry and the clothing the naked. Good earnest Christian men smoke and drink. Evangelists and pastors owned of God in the salvation of souls smoke and see no harm in it. The reason is they have never seen how the thing works, and don’t know the harm it does. I feel sure that if they could see with their own eyes men, women, and children, hungry and in rags, when but for tobacco and whisky they might be well fed and well clothed, these same good brethren, whose example is quoted against my position, would be the first and most earnest to say, “I will neither smoke tobacco nor drink whisky while the world stands.”’

At a later date, not from any change in his views, but in deference to the views of others, with whom he was always anxious to work in harmony, he modified his plans so far as not to make the use of whisky and tobacco absolute bars to admission into the Christian Church.

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 Chng Tz[u], T Ss[u] Kou, and Ch'ao Yang—all three being towns of some 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. His constant and consistent life of Christlike self-

denial in the effort to bless them told even more upon the beholders than all these other things combined. His correspondence is full of sharp and clear pictures of his daily toil, and of his spiritual experiences.

‘_Ch’ao Yang, May 14, 1886._—The people are very poor here. Last year the crops were not good. When the leaves come out on the trees, the poor people break off branches and eat the seeds of the elm-trees. I saw one woman up a high tree, taking down the seeds. She took off half the door, laid it up against the tree, went on the cross-bars like a ladder, and so got up. She threw down the little branches and twigs, and her three children below gathered them up. The elm seeds are just ripe now. They are the size of large fish-scales; when the wind blows they come down like snow.

‘I met three lamas going to a far-off place to worship. Every two or three steps they lay down flat on the ground, then got up other two or three steps, then prostrated themselves again. They did not know about Jesus saving people, and thought they would save themselves in that way. Poor people! yet they don’t like to hear about Jesus saving people. They want the credit of thus saving themselves.

‘_September 3._—At Ta Chng Tz[)u] we had seven days and seven nights’ rain. It was a great flood. The river rose and washed away about a hundred acres of land and forty or fifty houses. For two days the river floated down house-roof timbers, beams, &c. One poor man pulled down his house to save his timbers, and the house fell on him and killed him. It was pitiful to see the river washing away good land, two square yards falling into the roaring flood at a time. The

Chinamen did nothing: only stood and looked at it. Lots of walls and many houses fell down. One house in the court next our own fell down one morning after the rain was all over. The people had just time to jump out at the window. No one was hurt. Our room did not leak much, but the outside of the wall towards the street fell down. The inside of the wall still stood, so our room was whole. Chinese walls are all built in two skins. The one may fall and the other stand.

‘_October 25._—God has given the hunger and thirst for souls: will He leave me unsatisfied? No, verily. I am reading at night, before going to bed, the Psalms in a small-print copy of the Revised Bible, holding it at arm’s length almost, close up to a Chinese candle, to suit my eyes; for I cannot see small print well now, and I find much strength and courage in the old warrior’s words. Verily, the Psalms are inspired. No doubt about that. None that wait on Him will be put to shame. He is here with me.

‘_November 17._—We start about the fifth watch (6 A.M.), get to the fair early, spend the day on the street; it is late before we get quiet, and I fear it is now well on towards the third watch. I am in first-class health, though my feet and socks are in a decidedly bad way. The country is not at all safe, but we have as yet been preserved. Some days ago, two men who slept on the same kang with us, and started a little earlier than we did, were robbed. We overtook the travellers arranging themselves after the interview. I was annoyed at not getting away as soon as they left. God so arranged it, you see.

‘I have got a step nearer to God lately. It is this: I do not now strive to get near Him; I simply ask Christ to _take me nearer

Him_. Why shouldn't I? Does not Christ save men from distance from God and bring us near? _Peace, Blessing, and Power_, by Haslam, sent me by an old college mate in Scotland, was the means used. This chum tried my soul much when I was at home last. I think I was of use to him, and now he has been of much use to me. Let us sow beside all waters.

'My attitude now here is that of Psalm cxxiii. 2-4. I feel that God can _perform_ for, by, or rather use me as His instrument in performing, if He has a mind to; so I am looking for His hand, gazing about among the people that come to my stand to see the ones God has sent. I feel as helpless as a Chinese farmer in a drought; but when God opens the heavens, down it will come. Amen.'

Mr. Gilmour returned to Peking on December 13, 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_l._ to 40_l._

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."

After a visit to Tientsin and a brief rest in Peking, largely occupied with preparations for his next sojourn in Mongolia, he started on January 25, 1887. At Ta Chng Tz[]u he secured a kind of home, so as not to be exposed to all the discomforts and drawbacks of inn life, hoping also that a fixed centre might forward the preaching of the Gospel. Two rooms were taken for a year. They were situated at the inner end of a little trading court, around which were a tin-shop, a rope-spinner's room, and a stable. In one corner there was a pigsty. 'When first I saw it I almost refused to occupy it; but really there is no help for it, and finally we took it for a year.' It is always difficult to secure premises in a Chinese town, and exceptionally so under the limitation of money and of suspicion and dislike to which Christian missionaries are always exposed. 'It is only a lodging for me,' Mr. Gilmour continues, 'convenient for seeing converts or inquirers. The court is much too small, and the place not sanitary. But don't be in the least uneasy. My health is quite as safe there as in the best premises in Peking. I intend to occupy them for a month at the beginning of the Chinese year, and ten or fifteen days in the fourth, seventh, and tenth months. I hope also to come to some arrangement for a lodging in Ch'ao Yang. In T Ss[]u Kou I am simply in an inn, and pay at the usual rate for the nights I am there.'

A letter to his boys, dated March 24, 1887, depicts the kind of scene he so often witnessed, and the routine of work which would have proved so irksome but for the love and peace with which the Saviour filled his soul.

‘Mai Li Ying Tz[)u] is a very wicked place. There were no less than fourteen large tents set up for gambling, and, in addition, some thirty or forty mat-tents for gambling. I was there three days. The first day people were shy. The second day they were not much afraid. The third day I had quite a lot of patients. We sold a good few books, preached a good deal, and doctored a number of patients. From there we went to Bo-or-Chih, starting in the dark and travelling seventeen English miles before breakfast. After we had travelled ten miles we came to a little town just as people were opening their doors. A seller of _chieh jao_, that sticky stuff, had just set out his wheelbarrow with his pudding. We each bought a great piece, wrapped it in a _chien ping_ (a thin scone), and travelled on, eating it. That was our breakfast. Arrived at Bo-or-Chih, we set up our table at once, and, after preaching for a short time, patients came round us in crowds, and kept us busy till late in the afternoon.

‘The inn in which I am staying now is owned by two men, brothers, both of whom are opium smokers. The inn has a good trade, but it is all no use: it all goes to opium, and no good comes of it. There are two barbers connected with the place, and they both drink and gamble, so that they are in rags and poverty, though they have a fairly good business. It is so painful to see men degraded thus when, but for drink and gambling, they might be well off.

‘_April 28, 1887._—For the last week I have been very busy at a great temple gathering, which lasted six days. Such crowds of people came, though it was only a country district. It was the great religious event of the year for the neighbourhood, and how do you think they do? They hire a theatrical company to come and act six days in a great mat stage, put up for the occasion in front of the temple. Theatrical exhibitions are the religion of China. These shows are supposed to be in honour of the idols in the temple. The people think the gods will thus be pleased, and give them good seasons, health, etc.

‘What a crowd of women came to worship at the temple on the great day of the festival! Till noon that day women only were allowed to enter: no men. How the women were dressed—in all the colours of the rainbow, red trousers being especially prominent! How they moved along on their little feet! Walk you along on your heels—as I have seen you do—and that is just how they move.

‘No end of gamblers came too. There were twenty-six, or so, large tents put up to gamble in, and about as many straw-mat booths, and they all had plenty of trade. Eh, man, it is sad to see the utter worldliness of these Chinese. They soon found me out. I had my tent put up in a quiet place away from the bustle.[8] In front is the great flying sign, “The Jesus Religion Gospel Hall.” At the one end, “God the Heavenly Father;” at the other, “Jesus the Saviour.” They found me out, not because they wanted to hear me preach, but to get medicine. Oh, the numbers of suffering people I saw and attended to! I used to go out early in the morning, and be there all day, most of the time so busy that there was no time to eat. To get food I had to steal away because everyone would want me just to attend to him or

her before I went. When I had attended to that one there was another, and so on. I was able to cure a number of them, and got preaching a good deal too. I sold a number of books. It was the first time that a missionary had ever been there, and it was difficult to make them understand.’

[8] See the illustration on p. 245.

It is, as a rule, by direct dealing with individuals that the best results of Christian work in China are obtained, and to this Mr. Gilmour was always ready to make everything give way. In season and out of season, at any hour of the day or night, he was at the service of inquirers. The sight of a seeking face could banish his most exhausting feeling of fatigue, and nothing so swiftly dispelled the depression, from which he so often and so severely suffered, as the sight of a heathen coming to be more perfectly instructed about ‘the doctrine.’ Here are one or two such scenes:—

‘In the eighth month we had great pleasure in finding Mr. Sun much advanced in knowledge, and confessing his Christianity with great boldness. Before we left he was baptized, and one or two others were coming forward as inquirers—notably one man, who is a member of a sect, was making earnest inquiries. These men seem to be following after righteousness in their own half-instructed fashion. These sects are strong in numbers in some parts of the district, and, if God should give us some of these men as converts, we might hope for rapid progress among their companions. The last that I heard of this man, he was coming to Mr. Sun, asking many questions. He lodged with us one night, and I invited him to breakfast with me in the morning. He was declining on the plea that he was a

vegetarian. It was with much satisfaction that I was able to say in reply, "So am I."

'The Tsai li ti are strong in Ch'ao Yang. I have been praying and working to gain them for a year and more. One evening a deputation of two men called upon me in my inn, and said they had come representing many who wanted to know about Christianity. They, the Tsai li ti, had been watching me ever since I had come to Ch'ao Yang. They had listened much and often to our preaching, and now they had come to make formal inquiries. I gave them such information as I thought they needed, and we got on well enough till they asked me to refute a slander. The slander was to the effect that in a chapel in Peking, the preacher would, when he finished preaching, get down off the platform and have a smoke! I had to admit that this was no slander, but a true statement. I had a good deal to say in explanation of it; but, alas! the men came no more.'

To form any just estimate of Mr. Gilmour's work in Eastern Mongolia, it is needful constantly to bear in mind that it was practically a new departure. So far as we know, he is the only missionary in China connected with the London Missionary Society who adopted in toto not only the native dress, but practically the native food, and, so far as a Christian man could, native habits of life. His average expense for food during his residence in his district was threepence a day. This rate of expenditure was, of course, possible only because he adopted vegetarianism. His practice acted and reacted upon his thought, and he came at this time to hold the view, for and against which a great deal may be said, that it was a mistake for Chinese missionaries to live as foreigners—that is, to wear foreign dress, arrange their houses and furniture as nearly as

possible in European style, and eat European food. Both on its economical side and also as impressing the mind and heart of the Chinese, he believed that his was the more excellent way.

Most of his co-workers at Peking and Tientsin did not agree with him. An agreement would have involved, perhaps, following his example, under conditions that differed widely from those of Ta Chng Tz[ü] and Ch'ao Yang, this difference of opinion was only what was to be expected. It is referred to here only as a well-known fact, and no story of Mr. Gilmour's life could be trustworthy which did not represent the decided way in which, when he felt that loyalty to his work and loyalty to his Master constrained him, he could and did act in direct opposition to the wishes and views of brethren whom he fervently loved.

It became needful from time to time for him to justify his actions to the home authorities. Not that this was in any way needful from any doubt or lack of support on their part. But with regard to methods upon which there was marked divergence of view in the missionary committees abroad it was needful that a man like Gilmour should put his motives and reasons clearly before the governing powers. It is doing him bare justice to say that from this task he never shrank. The following extracts are from letters to the home officials of the London Missionary Society and they enable us to appreciate accurately the standpoint of the man whose thought they express. Writing in the light of the suggestion that perhaps he was putting a more severe strain upon his health than the efficient discharge of his difficult duty demanded, he says:—

‘I feel called to go through all this sort of thing, and feel perfectly secure in God’s hands. It is no choosing of mine, but His; and, following His lead, I have as much right to expect special provision to be made for me as the Israelites of old had in the matters of the Red Sea, the manna and water in the desert, the crossing Jordan, and the fall of Jericho.

‘One thing I am sure of. The thousands here need salvation; God is most anxious to give it to them: where, then, is the hindrance? In them? I hardly think so. In God? No. In me, then! The thing I am praying away at now is that He would remove that hindrance by whatever process necessary. I shall not be astonished if He puts me through some fires or severe operations, nor shall I be sorry if they only end by leaving me a channel through which His saving grace can flow unhindered to these needy people. I dare not tell you how much I pray for.

‘It is the foreign element in our lives that runs away with the money. The foreign houses, foreign clothes, foreign food, are ruinous. In selecting missionaries, physique able to stand native houses, clothes, and food, should be as much a *_sine qua non_* as health to bear the native climate. Native clothes are, I believe, more safe for health than foreign clothes; they are more suited to the climate, more comfortable than foreign clothes, and so dressed, a Chinese house is quite comfortable. In past days I have suffered extreme discomfort by attempting to live in foreign dress in native houses.’

And yet James Gilmour had nothing of the fanatic or bigot about him. At the period of his life with which we are now dealing, his severest trial was the loneliness due to his having no colleague. Whenever his brethren ventured to address

remonstrances to him, they were due largely to the conviction that entire isolation, such as he had to endure throughout his Mongolian career, must tell adversely upon his temperament. But in judging the character of the man it only heightens our love and respect for him that he did not allow the utter and successive failures of all efforts to secure him a colleague to hinder the work. No man more readily and more constantly acted upon the principle of doing the next best thing. His idea of satisfactory conditions for the work was never reached; but this never led him for one day to relax his own efforts or to loosen the strong hand of his self-discipline.

To any reader who has carefully followed the previous pages it must have become abundantly evident that Mr Gilmour believed in God's present and immediate influence in the passing events of daily life, and that the right attitude of life is one of absolute dependence upon, and submission to, the will of God. His diaries abound with proofs of this. He is delayed one morning in starting from his inn, and is annoyed. An hour or so later he overtakes the travellers who started earlier, and finds them just recovering from the assault of a band of robbers. The delay was God's providential care protecting him from robbery. And yet no man was ever less under the spell of religious fatalism. All that active effort and promptitude of mind and body could effect in the service of life he freely and constantly expended in his work. And indeed there lies before us a long letter written at T Ss[u] Kou on March 15, 1888, asking for an official proclamation from the Chinese authorities at Peking affirming 'that Christian worship is an allowed thing, and that native Christians are not required to contribute, or are exempted from contributing, to idol and heathen ceremonies, such as theatricals, or the building and

repair of temples.’ The proper official document was applied for at Peking, and in due time obtained.

On March 24, 1888, James Gilmour was rejoiced by the seeming fulfilment of his heart’s most eager desire—the arrival at T Ss[u] 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. Oh 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.

‘As to Mackenzie. His friendship I very keenly appreciated. The week of prayer in January 1887 we 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 1889. 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 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 Chng Tz[ü] 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 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 90 li 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 Chng Tz[ü], 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 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 sin 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 has 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 Chng Tz[]u], two; T Ss[]u] 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 Chng Tz[ü], four; T Ss[ü] 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 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 our 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 leadings 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 1889, 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 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 anteroom 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 a local carter for Ta Chng Tz[)u], 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.

‘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 shop-keepers 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 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 to-day’ 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 leave things at Ta Chng Tz[u];, 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 to-day 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 xii. 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 imperatively urged to cease for a season, not by his consciousness of failing 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 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 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.

CHAPTER X

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AS ILLUSTRATED BY LETTERS TO RELATIVES AND FRIENDS

This break in active work affords a convenient occasion for exhibiting in a still stronger light, by means of selections from his correspondence, some important sides of James Gilmour's character. He was a good correspondent and wrote freely to his relatives and friends. We have quoted largely hitherto from his official reports and from letters that refer to the condition and

progress of his life-work. But it is in the letters addressed to the circle of relatives and most intimate friends that he reveals more fully the deeper side of his life, and the strong and tender affection of his nature.

He corresponded regularly with his parents until the earthly tie was broken by the death of his mother in 1884 and of his father in 1888. His letters to the latter were very beautiful, especially those designed to strengthen his faith in the closing years when he had passed the eightieth milestone. The tone of the correspondence may be judged from the following examples:—

‘Peking: Friday, January 23, 1885.

‘My dear Father,—So this must in future be the heading of my letters—no longer my dear parents. Mother has gone. Yours of November 21 reached me this afternoon, or evening rather. As I came home from the chapel I found a beggar waiting at the gate. I thought he was going to beg, but he did not. Inside I found the gate-keeper waiting at our house door for a reply note, to say that the letter had been delivered. I went to my study, and was praying for a blessing on the chapel preaching when Emily came. I let her in. She had your letter in her hand. It had come by Russia, and the Russian post sometimes sends over our mail by a Peking beggar, paying him of course.

‘I have not had time to think yet. On my heels came in men for the prayer-meeting we hold in our house on Friday evening, and till now I have been almost continuously engaged. It is now 10.20 P.M. It so happens that this week I am much behind

in my sermon preparation for Sunday, and it also happens that I am going to preach on whole families believing on Christ. What brought this subject to my mind is one of our old Christians who is dying, the only Christian in his whole family. His great grief is that they (his family) remain heathens. In addition, too, a Christian father admitted to a missionary the other day that he had not taught Christ to his daughter who had just died. Preaching on this subject I will have something to say about my own dear, good, anxious mother, and of how she used to say when I was a boy, “What a terrible thing it will be if I see you shut out of heaven!” She did not say terrible; “unco” was her word.

‘I have not yet had time to realise my loss, and cannot think of the Hamilton house as being without her. Eh, man! you know how good a mother she was to us, and I have some idea of what a companion and help she was to you. You two had nearly fifty years together. You must feel lonely without her. Fathers and mothers are thought much of by the Chinese, and you, at my suggestion, were most heartily and feelingly prayed for by the Chinese at our prayer-meeting to-night. You would have felt quite touched could you have heard and understood them.’

There is a special interest attaching to the sentence used frequently by his mother. On page 41 he refers to his conversion, but no record appears to have been preserved, giving any detail or fixing with any exactness the date. But his brothers have a conviction that his constant recollection of the oft-repeated and well-remembered words, ‘What an unco thing it will be if I see you shut out of heaven!’ was one of the most potent influences in bringing about his conversion. The letters

immediately following were written during the last two years of his father's life.

‘Let us not be disturbed at all about our not having more communication. I pray often for you and remember you more frequently still, and feel more and more that earth is a shifting scene, that here we have no permanent place, that heaven is our home, that your wife—my dear mother—has gone there, that my wife has gone there and is now in the Golden City, and that, sooner or later, you and I will be there, and that, when there, we'll have plenty of time to sit about and talk all together in a company. Lately I have come to see that we have but to put ourselves into the hands of Jesus and let Him do with us as He likes, and He'll save us sure and certain. He can make us willing even to let Him change us and train us.

‘You are eighty years old. I am proud of you. I like to think of your life. Mother told me, when I was a lad, of some of your early struggles. God has been with you and guided you on through all to a good old age of honour and respect and love. Trust Him and He'll not leave you. Depend upon it, God has something better for us in the world to come than He has ever given us here. And it is not difficult to get it. God wants to give it to us all; offers it to us, and is distressed if we don't take it. We have only to go to Christ and ask Jesus to make it all right for us, and He'll do it. I know you are in earnest. Jesus will turn away no earnest man.’

Mr. Gilmour senior acted as steward of the little store which his son by rigid economy was amassing for the benefit of his children. Scotch thrift was well exemplified in them both. But in the course of 1887 James Gilmour became troubled about

this accumulation of even that small sum which he could call his own. In his lonely introspective Mongolian life the possession of money came to wear in his view the aspect of distrusting God. At this juncture the London Missionary Society was in a somewhat serious state as regards funds. A special appeal had been sent out indicating that if additional funds were not forthcoming, some fields of work might have to be given up. James Gilmour's response was an order to pay over anonymously the sum of 100_l._ to the general funds of the Society, and 50_l._ to that set apart for widows and orphans.

‘March 16, 1887.

‘My dear Father,—Some explanation is due to you of the order to pay the London Missionary Society 100_l._ of my money as a contribution to their funds.

‘The money that I have in the bank is the result of long and, much of it, of self-denying savings on my part and the part of my late wife—more on hers than mine, perhaps. When she died, and I was going off to this remote and isolated field, it was a comfort to me to think that in the event of my death there was a little sum laid past which would help my sons to get an education. I have added to that sum all I could from my house-furniture sale, &c., and it has reached a good figure—the exact sum I cannot yet tell—I have not yet had your account for 1886.

‘Some time ago God seemed to say, “_Entrust that money to My keeping!_” and, as days went on, the command seemed to

get more loud and be ever present, so much so that finally I could not read my Bible for it or pray. I had no resource left but to obey; I did not like to give it up; but finally it has appeared to me that God is only keeping the funds for the lads and that He will arrange for them to have them all right when they are needed. How He can do this I need not ask. He may, for instance, keep me alive for the sake of the lads. In one sense it seems an unwise thing not to be laying up something for the children's education; but that is only one side of it. God seems to ask me to trust Him with my children, and I trust Him with them. They are far from my care and control, and I know such painful cases of the children of missionaries growing up unbelievers that I dare not do anything that seems to me not to be putting them fully into God's care and up-bringing.

‘In addition, I am exhorting people here to become Christians, by doing which they throw themselves and their children outside of the community. I tell them to do it, and trust God's protecting them in troubles and helping them in difficulties; and I can hardly do that if I have not faith in God myself for me and mine.

‘Again, I need God's help and blessing much in my work here, and I do not seem to myself to be able to expect it if I do not trust Him. So please regard the money removed as not lost, only put into a safer bank.’

The following letter, also dealing with money matters from the Christian point of view, is so striking in many ways that it has been deemed advisable to quote it in extenso:—

‘Ch’ao Yang, Mongolia: May 6, 1888.

‘My dear Father,—Enclosed please find some directions about the disposal of my money. These arrangements are so contrary to my previous arrangements that some explanation is due to you and to my brothers. Here they are.

‘In my mission work out here I am much thrown upon God. The field is a very hard one. The superstitions are like towns walled up to heaven. The power of man avails nothing against them. As far as man is concerned I am almost alone. I turn to God. I hear the words, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” saith the Lord. I trust Him. I call upon Him. I commune with Him. He comes near me. I ask Him to convert men. There are conversions, a few true, as far as I can judge. But there seems some barrier between God and me to a certain extent. Thinking round to see what it can be, I hear a voice saying, “Can’t you trust Me with the money you have laid up for your children?” I think over it I pray over it. I say, “I may die and the boys need the money.” God replies, “If you trust Me with it, don’t you think I’d give them it as they needed?” I say, “But my father and brothers might not see it so, and might not like the idea of destitute orphan children on their hands.” God replies, “With Me for their banker children are not destitute, and if you prefer father and brothers before Me, you are not worthy of Me.” Then I say, “What will you have me do?” God says, “Give Me the money; I’ll see they have all that is necessary.” I dare not disobey. I don’t want to disobey. I am so much exercised over the spiritual well-being of the boys, that I gladly do anything that will make them in any sense more specially protgs of God. I am alarmed at the fate of some

missionaries' children who have not turned out godly men.
Preserve the boys from this!

'This is no sudden resolution. I have thought and prayed much over it. I can delay this step no longer without feeling I would be refusing to follow God's guidance. I feel, too, that God has so many ways in which He can bless the lads and me, that in making this arrangement I am running no risk. The only thing I am not quite clear about is the detailed disposition of the money. Meantime, it seems to me that I can best use it for God in this mission here. I mean to bank it in Peking, in the first instance, and use it for renting or buying premises.

'As to the general principle of having money for ourselves or children, I do not think God asks us all to put all we may have or get thus in His keeping, or asks me even to put all into His keeping in this especial manner. You know the money was originally saved from the salary given by the mission, and in this sense is peculiar. Money that I had earned by trade, or otherwise come by, I do not think God would ask me to dispose of it so. But His voice seems very plain in this present case.

'My salary I shall still have paid to me, and the children's remittances shall come as usual. If I live I guess this will be enough for the education of the lads. If I die, the lads are not destitute. Even in a worldly sense, and quite apart from this sum which I am banking with God, and which I am sure He'll repay with compound interest when needed, if left orphans they would be in some sense provided for by the London Missionary Society, which, though it gives no pensions to any one, yet yearly raises funds and gives money to broken-down

old missionaries, widows, and orphans. I don't suppose it is much or enough, but it is something. I say this that you may not be troubled should your faith be weak or waver.

'I hope that these arrangements may not seem unwise to you, and will commend themselves to you far enough to have your consent if not your warm approval. For myself I am thankful that God has given me faith enough to trust Him so. It has taken time to come to this. Myself is a small matter—it takes more faith to trust for one's children. Just fancy old Abraham offering his Isaac. Just fancy, God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Let us respond to God's love.

'Your loving son,
'JAMES GILMOUR.'

In compliance with his wish a sum amounting to several hundred pounds was sent out to Peking and there banked by him. Had not the many difficulties which Chinese habits placed in the way prevented the completion of negotiations, there is hardly any doubt that James Gilmour would have himself spent this money on his own mission-field. He died before any of the negotiations for premises which he had commenced reached a successful issue. As he had not specified in his will that this sum was to be devoted to mission work, the trustees of his boys have had no alternative, and have felt it their duty to consider it a part of his estate, the income of which should be devoted to the education of his sons. But the intention of James Gilmour was clear and well known, and it is to be hoped that the interest felt by many friends in his life and work will prove strong enough to secure a permanent home for the mission as a

memorial of its founder, and on the site of his glad and self-sacrificing toil.

A year or two later, in a letter to his boys, he seeks to enforce the duty of careful, systematic giving to God.

‘Ch’ao Yang: August 19, 1890.

‘I wonder if you are giving a tenth of all the money you get to God. I think it is a right thing to do and a good thing. Mamma did it: I do it: and God never let us want for money. I would be glad if you would like to do it. But don’t do it merely to please me. Don’t do it except you can do it gladly. God likes people to do things gladly. I am quite sure you would get blessing by it. Money given to God is never lost. And it is easier to begin the habit now than later.

‘When you give it to God you can put it into the London Missionary Society box; it would only be fair to give some little part of it at the collection at the church to which you go. You could give some of it for destitute children. It does not matter much where you give it. I think the London Missionary Society has the best claim. Think over it, boys. Jesus died to save us: surely we can show our gratitude by giving Him some of our money?’

Later letters to his father outline for us his religious experience, and enable us to realise something of the spiritual experience of these years.

‘Ch’ao Yang: March 29, 1887.

‘I am wondering how you all are. God has been drawing me nearer to Him these last weeks, and I am living in the hope that He will bless me and my work largely some day. There is much ignorance to be removed, much suspicion, much misunderstanding of me as a foreigner, and I am hammering away as hard as I can. There are mountains of difficulty to be removed, but I am trusting in God to remove them, and these last days I have had much peace and joy in my heart thinking of God’s love to me and the salvation of Jesus. I have no doubt at all about my being His, and sometimes the great hope is almost too much to realise. But I am often at the same time downcast that I cannot see more people here converted, and I think that, if God has a favour to me and delights in me, He can well move the hearts of these people to believe in His Son, and choose out people to come and help me in my work. I am sometimes lonely here, and wish I had a friend to talk to and tell all my troubles, and then I think that Jesus is such a friend, and so I tell Him all my griefs; but I would like to have a colleague.

‘I hope, my dear father, that your heart is contented and happy in Jesus. Only let Him arrange all things for you as regards your soul, and He’ll do it all right. He can be trusted. Heaven is not far away; we’ll soon be there; comfort your heart. Won’t it be too blessed to be again with our wives, freed from all that is earthly, and suffering, and surrounded by nothing but what is nice! This is no dream: it is real; it is true; it is kept for us; it will be ours. We’ll see it soon; you and I will be there together. It may be some time before we are there together; but years soon pass. Cheer up, my father!

‘We miss much by not living near to Jesus—taking Him at His word and expecting that He’ll do all we need done for us both in saving us and in making our hearts good. Jesus is real and heaven is real, and our share in heaven, if we trust and follow Jesus, is real. You say you are busy: so am I. You have cares: so have I. Go ahead and look after your work and business; but you’ll do it all the better that your heart is at peace with God and at rest in Jesus. I find that the closer I am to Jesus the better I can meet and bear all troubles, trials, and difficulties, and you will find the same true if you try.

‘I feel quite lifted up to-night. I have a room to myself. This is the first time I have had a room to myself since leaving Peking January 25. It is pleasant to be private a little. This room is private to me alone only after (say) 8 P.M., when I am left in peace. I hope to have this room for three weeks.

‘I am afraid, if you saw the room, you would not think it much of a place. To-night, too, I have a pillow. For over three weeks I have rested my head on some folded-up bag or article of dress: to-night I have a pillow. Christ had not where to lay His head. In all things I am still better off than He was. If I could only see souls saved I would not care for the roughing it.’

In a letter later in the same year to a missionary colleague in a distant field Mr. Gilmour unveils still further his religious history:—

‘Mongolia: October 7, 1887.

‘Yours of May 31 to hand three or four days ago. The China Inland Mission has a lot of good men in it. It does a good work. It is warm-hearted devotion that wins souls and gets God’s approval. My experience has been different from yours, happily. All along I have gone on the “headlong for Christ” way of things here, even when preaching to the most intellectual English and American audiences, and they have received me royally. Man, God has waked me up these last years to such an extent that I feel a different man. I sometimes wonder now if I was converted before. I suppose I was, but the life was a cold, dull one. Just the other day Jesus, so to speak, put out His hand and touched me as I was reading a hymn, something about desiring spiritual things and passing by Jesus Himself. I wanted His blessing more than I wanted Him. That is not right. Lately, too, I have become calm. Before I worked, oh so hard and so much, and asked God to bless my work. Now I try to pray more and get more blessing, and then work enough to let the blessing find its way through me to men. And this is the better way. It is the right way. And I work a lot even now. Perhaps as much as before; but I don’t worry at the things I cannot overtake. I feel, too, more than I did, that God is guiding me. Oh! sometimes the peace of God flows over me like a river. Then it is so blessed, heaven is real. So is God: so is Jesus. Our lot is a great one.

‘Try not to fly around so much: take more time with God. Be more in private prayer with Him, and see if He will not give you a greater spiritual blessing for your people. After all, the great want, as I gather from your letters, is the spiritual blessing on the people. Ask it, man, and you’ll get it. God’s promises are sure. I am trying to combine the China Inland Mission, the Salvation Army, and the L.M.S. I have a great

district, and a hard one, all to myself. There is said to be a young doctor on his way out to me. I am writing by this mail for three young laymen. Non-smoking and teetotalism are conditions of Church membership. I have seen no foreigner since January 25, and am not likely to see one till December 5. My mails take an enormous time to reach me, and two sent in June and July from Peking (eight days off) have never come to hand at all. I am baffled, battered and bruised in soul in many ways, but, thank God, holding on and believing that He is going to bless me.

‘Eh, man, never talk of not going back. Go back, though you can only do half work; go back, and work less and pray more. That is what you need. I have been a vegetarian for over a year. I find fasting helpful to prayer. Two books by Andrew Murray, Wellington, Cape Town—_Abide in Christ, With Christ in the School of Prayer_—have done me much good. May blessings be on your dear wife and children! Yours, hoping to have a good long holiday with you in heaven,

‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

Some years earlier in his career he had written a letter of brotherly remonstrance to one who, in a moment of depression and without any adequate cause, felt himself slighted. The same spirit breathes through both, but is richer and fuller in the later letter. God had been teaching James Gilmour in a hard, but a fruitful school.

‘I know of your zeal in working at home as well as abroad, and I am greatly grieved to find you think you are badly treated. I

think it is very unfortunate that any agent should have that feeling about his Society, L.M.S. or other. I am alarmed, too, my dear fellow, to find you express yourself so strongly. It is hardly the thing. Would Christ have said that? I do hope you will pardon my speaking so, but you know sometimes a rash word does more harm than a deed even. And I am anxious that you should have a peaceful mind. I know your value, and wish to see you nearly perfect. Let me remind you of a thing we both believe, and a thought I have often been comforted by. Jesus has suffered even more for us than we can ever suffer for Him, and what you do in raising funds and endeavouring is done, not for L.M.S., but for Him, for Him, and He sees and knows and won't forget, but sympathises and appreciates, and at the end will speak up straight and open for His true men. I often lug portmanteaus, walk afoot, and, as the Chinese say, "eat bitterness," in China and in England. I am not thanked for it, but He knows. No danger of being overlooked. Now, don't be "huffed" at my lecturing you, and don't think I must think a lot of myself to suppose that I am running up a bill of merit, like a Buddhist, and think I am Jesus's creditor. My dear fellow, you know better than that. I point out to you and remind you of the only way I know to be persistently useful, and at the same time happy.'

But of all the relationships of life—son, brother, friend, ambassador for Christ—that which most naturally, most profoundly, and most beautifully reveals his very heart is when he writes as the loving father to his distant motherless boys. A large number of his letters to them have been entrusted to the hands of his biographer. Many of them touch upon subjects too sacred for publication. They deal with those closest of earthly ties in which not even intimate friends can legitimately claim a

share. But it was felt that they reveal a side of his nature and character that ought not to be entirely hidden in any picture of his life. For this reason a somewhat extensive selection has been made from this tender and helpful correspondence. When it first began the lads were too young to read the letters themselves, but he wrote long accounts of his work to be read to them, and it is pleasant to see how keen his eye became in noting such things as were likely to amuse them and to arrest their attention. Some of the letters are written in big letters resembling printed capitals. The brief, childlike letters that were sent to him by them were bound up into a paper volume, which he carried about with him during his Mongolian wanderings, and in looking them over he found an unfailing solace and refreshment. He often illustrated his own letters to them by rough but effective sketches of persons and things which he saw. The death of their mother had brought the lads and their father very near to one another, and although lost to sight, they always thought and spoke of the dear one who had gone as still of the family, as in perfect happiness, and waiting only God's time to reunite them in the happy life of heaven.

When it was decided to entrust them to the care of an uncle in Scotland, Mr. Gilmour set out the desires he cherished with regard to their training. It is only to be regretted that similar plans are not formed and acted upon in the training of all children.

‘The laddies are here with me now, and I am both father and mother to them. To-night I darned three stockings for them when they went to bed. You see I have been away two months, and in a week or two I may have to part from them for ten years, so I am having a little leisure time with them. I

sometimes do feel real bad at the idea of the two orphan lads going away so far; but then the promise of Christ that no one leaves parents or children for His sake, without being repaid manifold, comforts me by making me believe that God will raise up friends to comfort them wherever they may be.

‘Cheer up! The two worlds are one, and not far separate. Mrs. Prankard, I hear, won’t have Emily’s name mentioned. We here go on the other tack, and the children are all day long talking about what mamma did and said, and adventures we had together. And why not? The tears come sometimes: let them, they do no harm, are a relief more than anything, and the time is coming when God will wipe away all tears from our eyes.

‘I wish them to be Christ’s from their youth up. I wish them to get a good thorough education, not too expensive, to be able to read, write, and spell well. Should either of them turn out likely, I might be able to let both, or that one have a college education, but I don’t want either of them to go there if they don’t show adaptation for it.

‘What I want of you is something money cannot buy, motherly and fatherly care in Christ for the desolate lads, whose whole life in time and eternity too may largely depend on how they are trained and treated during the next few years. I am not rich, but I can support my boys. This Christian care and love, however, is what is not to be had for money, so I beg it.

‘I had five hours’ conversation with one Chinaman at a stretch the other day. I think he was not far from the kingdom of God at first, and I believe he is nearer now. All these things take

time, and I am most anxious to be with the children much these last days. Oh, it is hard to think of them going off over the world in that motherless fashion! We were at mamma's grave yesterday for the first time since September 21. We sang "There is a land that is fairer than day," in Chinese, and also a Chinese hymn we have here with a chorus, which says, "We'll soon go and see them in our heavenly home," and in English, "There is a happy land." The children and I have no reluctance in speaking of mamma, and we don't think of her as here or buried, but as in a fine place, happy and well.'

Here are a few short extracts from the earlier letters:—

'Cheer up, my dear sonnies! We shall see each other some day yet. Tell all your troubles to Jesus, and let Him be your friend. I, out here, think often of mamma and her nice face, and how good she was to you and to me. You will not forget her. She sees you every day, and is so pleased when you are good lads. We'll all go some day and be with her, won't that be good? Meantime, Jesus is taking care of her, and will take care of us.

'Sometimes, when I am writing a letter to you, and come to the foot of a page, and want to turn over the leaf, I don't take blotting paper and blot it, but kneel down and pray while it is drying.

'I am going away, too, in a few days; then I'll have no one but Chinese to speak to. Never mind, I'll just tell Jesus all my affairs; I cannot go away from Him. He is never too busy to talk to me. Just you, too, tell Jesus all your troubles. He sees both you and me.'

From the longer letters we select three or four, and give them exactly as they were written. From them the character of many others, from which only brief extracts can be taken, may be judged.

‘Ch’ao Yang: April 10, 1887.

‘My dear Sons,—I am well and thankful for it. I am getting on well too, thank God. I have had terrible weather lately though. Daily I have my tent—it is only a cloth roof on six bamboo poles—put up in the market-place. We have had three days’ wind. Eh, man, the first day the dust was terrible. But I had lots of patients and remained out all day. At last we had to take down our tent. It could not stand. The tent was carried to the inn, but we remained with our table till evening. You would hardly have known us for dust. But patients came all the time. Next day the tent was blown down twice. Once a man’s head got such a smack with the bamboo tent pole, but he said nothing and took it quite pleasantly. A peep-show man near us got his show blown down and scattered about. He gathered it up and went home to his inn.

[Illustration: JAMES GILMOUR’S TENT]

‘I am so glad that the people like us and trust us and come about us for medicines. Women came too. Boys came too. Just now the school boys have holiday for the fair, and they stand for a long time together looking at me doctoring the people. What the boys like to see is a glass bottle of eye medicine which I bring out and set up. Then I dip a glass tube in and press an india-rubber bulb. The air comes out in the water in

bubbles and rises up to the surface, and the boys are so delighted to see it bubbling. They will wait a long time and like to see it ever so often. They are sometimes troublesome, then I send them away. When they are good I shove the glass tube deep down into the bottle, and they are so delighted to see the air bubbling up from the bottom.

‘When a man comes to have a tooth pulled even the men are delighted, and advise him to have it out. They want to see the fun. Mothers send their little boys for medicine, and I am so pleased with some of the little lads. They are so modest and so polite, making a deep bow as they go away. Always be modest and polite, my sons, and people will love you and treat you well.

‘The boys buy a lot of books too, and I preach to them earnestly, because in ten years to come they will be men, and if they know about Jesus now they may more easily become Christians some day soon. You, Jimmie, know Jesus; does Willie? Teach him. Mamma is not here to teach him, and I am far away. You are his big brother. Teach you him like a good laddie as you are.

‘The other day when I was preaching a man was standing behind me with a little black pig under his arm. He wanted to hear me preach, but the pig would not be quiet. He held its mouth shut, but the little pig would still manage to give a squeak now and again. At last it would not be quiet at all, and he had to go away with it. I could not help smiling at him. There is an old man here in my inn. He is owner of the inn. His son manages the inn. The old man is not very old. He is about sixty-five. But he used to be a great opium smoker. A year or

more ago he had a very serious illness and gave up his opium, but he had wrecked his health by his smoking. He cannot now live many months. He can hardly speak plainly now. He comes to see me in my room, and I try to tell him about Jesus, hoping that he may be saved. He listens, but he is not very bright in his mind. I hope he may pray to Jesus.

‘The other day I had to pull my own tooth. It was the back tooth and had been painful for days. There was no one who could do it for me, so I sat down with a little Chinese looking-glass before a candle, got a good hold of it with the forceps, and after a good deal of wrenching out it came. He was a deep-pronged fellow, and he did bleed. I was so thankful that God helped me to get it out. I can sleep now all right.

‘Our Mongol donkeyman wants to be a Christian. I hope he is sincere, but he is very slow and dull at learning. There are three other men here who are learning about Jesus too, but it is too early yet to say much about them. A good many people learn some, then stop. But it is late and I must go to bed, else I won’t be able to preach and doctor all day in the market-place at the fair to-morrow.

‘Praying that God may bless you, my sons, and sending you much love,

‘I am your affectionate Father,
‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

‘Ta Chng Tz[)u]: Sept. 3, 1887.

‘My dear Sons,—I am well, and thankful for it. The three Christians here come daily to evening worship. There are here others who want to be Christians, but who have not courage enough. One man’s wife won’t let him be a Christian; she says she will kill herself if he does. Another man is in the same case. He is a Chinaman, his wife is a Mongol. Still another man has a Mongol wife, and she kept him back. The other day he came and confessed Christianity. His wife does not consent, only says: “We’ll see.” Another man’s father hinders his son from Christianity. The lad is a very nice lad.

‘Yesterday was the day when people make offerings of food and fruit at the graves. One of the Christians was sent to do so. He brought the melon here, and we ate half of it with him.

‘Still another man is forbidden by his father to be a Christian. That is, in all, five men are Christians at heart, and read our books and are learning Christianity, but do not confess Christ in this one place. Do you know what Jesus says about such people (Matt. x. 32-39)? Jesus says that, if they obey others rather than Him, they are not worthy to be His disciples. I am praying for all these people. I ask you, too, to pray for these and all like them, that they may be able to confess Christ. It is difficult for men in China to be Christians. How different with you! We all want you to be Christians. Your father and friends all help you to be Christians, and if you are not Christians we are all distressed.

‘Boys, do be true to Jesus. In your words and deeds honour Him. Make His heart glad. Jesus wants your love. He loves you and died for you. You cannot but love Him if you think how He loves you. Good-bye. Meantime I am just going to

breakfast, and then for a day on the street, trying to tell the people about Jesus. God bless you, my dear lads!

‘It is now afternoon. I write a few lines. A lad in a shop here has a tame dove. He has painted it all over different colours. It looks absurd. I don’t like to see it sitting about the shop. Doves look so happy flying about. Mamma, too, liked to see birds on the trees and houses wild, not kept in cages.

‘I guess you are just about getting your breakfast. Here it is about 4 P.M. With you it should be 8 A.M. Saturday; I wish I could see you. My love to you, my dear sons. May you always, both now and when grown, be boys and men that know and love Jesus! I pray for you. Your loving father,

‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

In August 1884 a third son was given to Mr. and Mrs. Gilmour, whom they named Alexander. In 1887 spinal trouble developed, and in December of that year he died. ‘Though often ill,’ wrote his father when announcing the death to the uncle after whom he had been named, ‘his life was a happy one. It is now happier than ever. Thanks be to God that there is, and that we know that there is, a bright and happy life beyond. Let us make that the great meeting-place for ourselves and our children and friends. May it stand before us as a joy! As ever and anon one and another goes there, may we feel that we have more and more interest there! Let us live looking to the joy set before us!’ This baby-brother is the Alick referred to in the following letter:—

‘Ta Chng Tz[)u], Mongolia: February 11, 1888.

‘My dear Sons,—I am well, and thankful for it. I got here two days ago. I had such a cold time of it on the road! I never felt the cold so much before.

‘People here are very busy. This is the last day of the Chinese year.

‘To-morrow is the first day of the Chinese year. Everybody is buying all sorts of food, because the shops do not open for some days after the new year. They are very busy, too, scraping off the old papers at the sides of their doors and pasting up new papers. They (the papers) are red, and look fine at first with the great black Chinese characters written on them. But the sun after a while takes the colour out of them.

‘They are busy, too, pasting up the new gods in their houses. They (the gods) are sheets of paper with pictures of gods on them. Every house has a god of the kitchen. They send him to heaven, as they think, by burning him. They burnt the old one last Saturday. They are putting up the new one now. They think that when he is burnt he goes to heaven and reports to a god what he has seen in the house during the year. I ask them if I burnt them would they think they were going to heaven? They buy sticky sugar-cakes to give him so that he may be pleased, and not tell on them for doing evil things. They think, too, that the sugar sticks his lips together, so that when he wants to tell on them he can’t get his mouth open! Isn’t it all very silly and very sad? The shopkeepers, too, paste up a “god of riches,” thinking that thus they will become rich!

‘To-morrow (Sunday) I hope to baptize a man. He is a Chinaman. That will make four Christians here. They all have faults and weaknesses, and I am not very easy in my mind about them. Pray that God may make them better and make them grow in grace. Pray, too, that God may convert more of the people. Pray, too, that God may give us a house of our own to live in. People here are afraid to let us have a house. Now that Dr. Roberts is coming, we will need a house. He is coming in six or seven weeks. Then he stays two months, and goes back to Tientsin for a while again. We saw the Christian at T Ss[u] Kou as we passed. The Ch’ao Yang man we have not seen yet.

‘I have made all your letters to me into a book, and have them with me. Your letters are nice to read, and show great improvement in the writing. I am going to keep all your letters this year too and bind them. You may like to see them when you grow big. The last letter from you is dated October 27.

‘My dear sons, I think of you often and pray for you much.

‘You have a photo of mamma’s grave. Little Alick’s little mound is close to mamma’s, on the side nearer little Edie’s. Mamma’s and Alick’s coffins touch down below. They lie together. But mamma and Alick are not there. They are in heaven, with its golden streets and its beautiful river, and its trees of life, and its beautiful gates, and its good, loving, kind people, and Jesus and God. They are having such a nice time of it there!

‘My boys, don’t be afraid of dying. Pray to Jesus, do the things He likes, and if you die you will go to Him, to His fine place, where you’ll have everything that is nice and good. I don’t know whether you or I will go there first, but I hope that by-and-by we’ll all be there, mamma and Alick and all. I like to think of this. Meantime let us be doing for Jesus all we can, telling people about Him and trying to persuade them to be His people. Are your schoolfellows Jesus’ boys? Do you ever tell them of Him? Tell them, my dear sons.

‘I hope to get letters from you in about a month.

‘Good-bye, my dear boys.

‘May you be good and diligent, and then you’ll be happy. Jesus can make you glad.

‘Your loving Father,
‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

Mrs. Meech had shown much motherly kindness to her little nephew Alexander, and only a few months after he had died she herself lost a little son. Mr. Gilmour, on hearing the sad tidings, wrote to her as follows:—

‘Mongolia: March 25, 1888.

‘My dear Mrs. Meech,—Many congratulations and condolences with you. Your little son has gone to Emily. She’ll look after the little man as you looked after her little man. Just

fancy! we have family connections in heaven not a few, and ever increasing. I hope you are now getting better and going on all right.

‘I am much cheered by the good news of soul movements in the West Mission. May they continue and increase!

‘With many prayers for you all, and kept in constant remembrance of you all by the date block,

‘Yours in loving sympathy,
‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

‘May 30, 1888.

‘I am doctoring a little homeless lad’s head here. I put on ointment all over it to-day. He cried. I said I had medicine that would stop the pain, and brought out six cash—one farthing—and told him to go and have a bowl of buckwheat meal strings. All laughed, he stopped crying, and did not seem to feel the pain after that. Most of the people in the town are much impressed with the improvement in the boy’s head. Before he came to me I saw a Chinese medicine-man poking at the lad’s head with a straw. When he came I rubbed on ointment with my finger. The bystanders were much pleased to see I was not averse to touching the poor dirty lad’s sore head. Jesus touched a leper, and I like to do things like what Jesus would do. That is the right way, boys. Always think what Jesus would have done, and do like Him.’

‘Mongolia: Sept. 9, 1888.

‘My dear Sons,—I am out on a journey. I knew letters were being sent me, and hoped to meet them. A long way off I saw a red umbrella, the sun shining through the oilcloth. The thought passed through my mind, “Can that be the messenger?” But I forgot all about it, reading a book as I walked along. All at once I heard, “He’s come,” and looking up, saw the red umbrella close at hand. It was him. The messenger returns to-morrow. I had had no letters for eighty days.

‘I wrote you last on August 2. Since then several men have professed Christ, and one man has been baptized.

‘One of the Christians at Ta Chng Tz[Du] stole my bankbook and drew money of mine, amounting to about 3 1. He says he is penitent, and we have put him on a year’s probation to see how he does. He is a lazy man. Long ago I said, “If you are lazy, some day the devil will make you a sinner,” and so he did. Had he been a diligent man he would not have been poor and would not have stolen. Diligence is a good thing, laziness is a bad thing. A good Christian cannot be lazy, because he knows Jesus does not like lazy people. I may write you again in a few days. Hoping next mail to get a letter from you (there was none this mail), and asking God to bless you in everything, and guide you in all your life,

‘I am your loving Father,
‘JAMES GILMOUR’

‘Ch’ao Yang, Mongolia: Saturday, November 17, 1888.

‘My dear Sons,—On the street to-day I saw a crowd standing. I went up to see what they were looking at, and found two Chinese gentlemen showing off a trained bird. One of the men stood down on the street. The other put three little flags so that they stuck on the wall. The bird then flew away, caught up a flag, and came flying back to its master in the street, carrying the flag in its bill. It looked very clever. Every time the bird brought a flag it was rewarded by being fed with some nice food which it liked. It was very pretty to see it. But after all it was a very trifling employment for two grown gentlemen to be engaged in. Even the crowd of ordinary Chinese seemed to think so.

‘I don’t like to see birds in captivity. It is pretty to see them wild flying about, and to hear them singing, but I pity them in cages, and tied by string as the Chinese are fond of doing with them. When I see birds tied I often think of mamma who used so much to like to see them wild.

‘I remember one day in Mongolia mamma stopped me from plucking a flower; she said it looked so pretty growing. Another time a beetle flew and alighted somewhere; mamma said, “It is so glad that it is alive, don’t hurt it.”

‘I am a good deal distressed to see the boys in the market-place. They steal just as much as ever they can from the sellers of straw and fuel, pluck out handfuls from the bundles and run away not at all ashamed. If the owner does not chase them they get off with it. If he throws down his load and runs after them they drop the plunder, the owner picks it up, and no more is said about it.

‘In summer little naked boys follow people carrying fruit in open baskets and steal it as they can: it all seems so dishonest, and no one seems to care. On the street lots of people will see a thief stealing a man’s pipe and never say a word, because it is not their business.’

‘I often think of you and pray for you. You do not forget mamma, I am sure. She is with Jesus. Be you His lads, and do your lessons well, and He’ll guide you all through life. Be diligent and careful lads, and you’ll grow up useful and honoured men. Constantly tell Jesus all your affairs.’

‘Goodbye meantime, my boys.

‘Much love from your affectionate Father, ‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

CHAPTER XI

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 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.”

‘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.

‘While at Millport he spent several nights in pasting up texts on every place likely to catch the eye; on stones and gateways and fences all round the island. He felt he must work while time was granted to him. I had noticed him making paste, but

thought nothing of it. I had heard the sound of a softly closing door at midnight, but thought it must be fancy. It had gone to my heart to feel his icy cold hand when he gave me his morning greeting. I noticed the little texts pasted up, but never thought of them as his work till the next day, when he began to make more paste, and then the whole thing came to me like a flash. I begged him with tears not to go out in the cold night air, and said that I knew God would rather have him stay in his warm comfortable bed and get well and strong. He answered so kindly: "Sister, it pains me to grieve you." But he finished his work nevertheless.

'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 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 any one speaking evil of another. I have seen him turn deadly pale when he has heard any one 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!"'

In a correspondence which he conducted with the daughter of one of his former professors there is very much that reveals how deep and strong his religious life had become, and how he had noted the current of renewed spirituality which is evident now in all sections of the Evangelical Church.

From this correspondence we have been permitted to cull some beautiful and helpful passages.

'Glasgow: November 18, 1889.

'May He Himself lead you into closer and closer communion with Him, and give you in very full measure His joy and His peace! For myself and for you, I pray that we may be more captivated with Him and His friendship. You know, I suppose, No. 565, "In the Secret of His Presence," in the 750 edition of

Sankey. No. 328, “O Christ, in Thee my soul hath found,” is one I like too, as being the expression of partly experience and partly aspiration. He is truly the true source of true satisfaction. May we be led to trust Him more largely in all the things of our lives! I am sure, too it will be the things where we have trusted Him most and been most consecrated in His service that we shall value most when we look back on life from the end. May you be largely satisfied with His blessing and Himself!’

‘November 20, 1889.

‘I wonder if your experience is anything like mine—that I have often got less benefit than I had hoped from special withdrawals from common surroundings to get more into the presence of the Lord. One or two prominent instances of this have happened to me. I am glad He can be found anywhere, and that He is easy of access always with favourable or unfavourable surroundings.

‘About feeling—never mind that at all. Things are so whether we feel them or not. Let us take God at His word, and not consider our feelings. God refuses no one who comes to Him in sincerity. Let us be sure of this. I once heard Spurgeon say a good thing: “When doubts or the devil comes and says, ‘You are not saved; you are not right with God,’ I go to Him and say, ‘If I never came before, I come now; if I never trusted before, I trust now.’” That cuts off all doubts about the present as standing on the past, and gives a fresh start.

‘All over the kingdom there is a hunger and thirst among many for a life of greater nearness to God; a feeling not only of the need of God being more of a daily, hourly reality and factor in our life, but that without Him more real and present life is not a satisfactory thing. When this feeling takes possession of one, we do not need to give up things as denying ourselves for Christ, so much as that we are changed in attitude towards many things. We drift away from them. Things that were gain to us we count loss for Christ. Our aims are different. May our lives be more fully taken captive thus! To a life lived thus, death is not a breaking off of anything; it is an enlargement of sphere.’

‘Hamilton: December 5, 1889.

‘All I know about the process is just going to God and telling what I want, and asking to be allowed to have it. “Seek, and ye shall find; ask, and ye shall receive.” I know no secret but this.... God understands His scholars, and knows how to teach each one. Different scholars may require different ways. We may trust ourselves in His hands, only let us be earnest students. I have at different times been quite surprised how a book, or a friend, or a remark conveying just the teaching needed at the time has been brought into my way. Yes, none teach like Him.’

‘December 25, 1889. —Oh that we may be more completely given over and up to Him to be used at His pleasure and as He pleases! Oh for more faith in Him! My lads are, I think, enjoying themselves; I commit them to Him; but eh!’

‘_January 1, 1890._—Just returned with my two lads after a day spent in London seeing my ship, the “Peshawur”. The ship is full. My berth is not in a good place—but it is not bad, after all, and it is not for long.... You’ll have lots of need of wisdom, and Jesus is made unto us wisdom as well as other things.... He’ll teach you all right. Don’t let us refrain for fear we make mistakes. The greatest mistake we could make would be to do nothing....

‘Everyone is amazed to see me look so well. It is remarked on all round. I feel remarkably well too....

‘May God be pleased to use me in His service!’

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. As the steamer was running down the English Channel he wrote a letter to an old college friend just returning to England whom he had not seen for twenty years, and whom he was very sorry to miss:—

‘In answer to yours of November 19 I directed an envelope to you long ago. It has lain in my writing-case ever since, often seen but always taken precedence of by the thing that stepped in before. Now’s your turn. I’m sorry you’ll not see me in England. I sailed yesterday My health has been restored, and I am off again.

‘You say you want reviving—Go direct to Jesus and ask it straight out, and you’ll get it straight away. This revived state

is not a thing you need to work yourself up into, or need others to help you to rise into, or need to come to England to have operated upon you—Jesus can effect it anywhere, and does effect it everywhere whenever a man or woman, or men and women ask it. Ask and ye shall receive.

‘My dear brother, I have learned that the source of much blessing is just to go to Jesus and tell Him what you need. I am delighted to hear you say you need blessing, because I know there is plenty and to spare with Jesus. Oh for an outpouring on all parts of the L.M.S. missions!

‘There is so much that I would like to say that it is hardly worth while beginning to say anything; so I’ll simply commend you to Jesus in all His fulness.’

On January 21, 1890, when nearing Port Said, he wrote:—

‘We have excellent company on board. Never had such a very pleasant voyage. Some of the First Salooners come to our Bible readings. Those who are unfriendly to Christianity are careful to give no cause of offence and are polite. So far our voyage has been an exquisite picnic. Knowing well what is before us, we still rejoice in the present Elim and calmly trust for the future. I went on board with a “tremendous cold.” So did two or three others. Mine, as I expected, went with the exposure.... No one teaches like Him who also was the first of preachers. In daily, hourly, humble communication with Him you will want for no wisdom and for no guidance and for no shepherding. Rejoice in that you have Him to manage everything for you.’

He reached Peking on March 14, 1890, 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, 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, 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. Fng for worship. Both of these men we saw, and their story seems true. Fng 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 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 distinctively 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 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 under tone, “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 to-day 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.’

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 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.

By the mail that conveyed the letter quoted on page 263 he also wrote to an Edinburgh friend:—

‘Do you know Adolphe Monod’s Farewell? It was sent to me lately by Rev. C. New, of Hastings, an old Cheshunt fellow-student. I have enjoyed it all, but most, I think, chapter xii., “Of Things not seen.” A volume of sermons, entitled The

Baptism of the Spirit, and other Sermons_, by Mr. New, I have enjoyed intensely. To the meek child-like spirit desiring the sincere nourishing of the Word nothing, I think, could be more helpful.... If ever you send a book to the boys, let it be one that will do their souls good.

‘I may be filling my life too full, but between medical work and spiritual work I have barely time to sleep, and I find that, for any hope of continuance of work, I must have time to sleep. For the last month I have been getting up at 4.30 A.M., and our evening worship and after conversation was not over till, say, 9 or 9.15 or 9.30, or even, once or twice, till 10 P.M. Then it would take us some time to square up the day’s affairs, and spread out my bedding. In the daytime I used to bolt my door, determined on an hour’s quiet; but often this was in vain. I would hear some poor cultivator come for medicine; he had a long way to go home, and I could not but let him in and attend to him.

‘Yesterday, as no one knew we were here, I escaped at 5.30 and made for the hot springs, twelve miles away. I walked there and back, and in consequence to-day am lame on my feet—badly blistered. I had a grand day—so quiet. Going, I sat down behind a mud wall and read the four first chapters of Hebrews. Arrived, I had my bath, then got an empty room in an inn, had sleep, dinner, tea, and read the rest of Hebrews. I never saw so much in Hebrews before.... On the road I had a four-mile conversation with a farmer, who finally said he believed Christianity was true. We have baptized six in all since I returned, five adults and one child—_all Chinese_. “Be not weary in well-doing. In due time we shall reap, if we faint not.” We are on God’s side. God has need of us. Oh let us be

such as God can take pleasure in! Faithfulness and love to Him are what He wants. Surely we can let Him have these two. Oh that it might be that everyone in every contact with us might feel the spiritual touch! Would not this be ideal Christian life? May He work it in us!

‘Have you been to any Salvation Army efforts? I always felt better for going, but latterly did not go much—I could not stand the “row.” I am eager that you should identify yourself with some soul-saving agency. If it really is a soul-saving concern, I don’t think it matters very much what it is.’

On July 21, 1890, he wrote to the same friend:—

‘Since July 3 we have had most extraordinary weather for this part—rain and dull; there have been only four or five days when I could go on to the street with my tent. I am therefore not so busy. In addition, Dr. Smith has joined me, and as he does all the indoor medical work, I am still less busy, and so I can write you more at leisure than usual.

‘The rain reached a climax on Saturday night, July 19. Till then, roofs and walls held out well. There were leaks in places, but nothing serious. We thought it had cleared off. Not a bit of it. The wind changed, it is true, but then rain came down in torrents, the ceilings—all reeds and paper—began to give way. Ever and anon splash came a bag of water, as the paper burst in different places, and Dr. Smith and I had a lively time of it shifting our boxes and bedding to dry spots. By dusk it was serious. I was just about my wits’ end when a Chinaman put his head into my room, and said with a grin, half in jest, half in earnest, “There is a tent standing idle out in that room, why not

put it up in your room?” The idea of putting up a tent in your bedroom seemed so absurd that we had a good laugh over it; but after thinking over it awhile, and thinking out how the thing could be done, we actually did it. It covered two-thirds of my kang, and a little space on the floor where I put my boxes. The inner corner of the tent I put up to cover my stock of books and medicines, lit my lamp, brewed a pot of tea, and, squatting on my feet, called in Dr. Smith. He said I looked “just like an opium-smoker.” Dr. Smith had a portable iron bedstead. On the top he put floor mats and a waterproof, and, without undressing, we went to bed. After a little a great crash was heard. Some part of the buildings had come down. In the rain and dark it was not easy to see what it was, but we at last found there had been more noise than real damage. We were thankful when day dawned.

‘The Chinese suffered much more than we did. Such a rain happens so seldom—once in three or four or five years—that houses are not roofed to resist it; the Chinese deeming it cheaper to take the wetting than to spend the extra money it would take to make the house stand such an extra rain.

‘In the wet weather I have been going into the Chinese Psalms, and have been much struck with the happy state of those who “fear the Lord,” “trust in the Lord,” and who, under a variety of expressions, are described as being on the Lord’s side, and under His protection.

‘And all these promises we can take for ourselves. Did you see in The Christian some time ago a story from Annan, of an old woman who was on the point of being sold out for not paying her rent? She had no money. Her son was in America.

A neighbour, thinking it strange that her son had not sent her money, asked to see her letters. There was one with a Post-office Order for 7_l_ 10_s_ in it. She had had it for some time, but thought it was only a picture. When cashed she was in funds. Wasn't she a stupid old woman? To be bankrupt, with an uncashed P.O. Order in her possession! How often we are much more stupid than she! To be fearful, anxious, troubled, cast down, when we have all the promises of God in our possession, ready for our use.

‘Let us cash our cheques. Nay, we have not only God’s promises, but God Himself for our portion. Why should we be spiritually bankrupt?’

‘Another thing I notice is the difference subjective states make in reading the Psalms. Sometimes I go over a Psalm and see little in it. At another time I go over the same Psalm and find it full of richness. How important it is to have the light of the Holy Spirit in our Scripture reading!’

‘_July 30._—The little _Wordless Book_ you sent soon fell into the hands of a Chinese convert, who asked to be allowed to carry it off. He wants to speak from it. He likes it because it gives him _carte blanche_, and lets him say just what he likes....’

‘How full the Psalms are! These days I am going through them in Chinese, as I said; I take one each morning and commit some verses of it carefully. Then, during the day, as time permits, I read a few more. How one the soul of man is! When dull and cold and dead, and feeling as if I could not pray, I turn to the Psalms. When most in the spirit, the Psalms meet almost

all the needs of expression. And yet deluded men talk of the Bible as the outcome of the Jewish mind! The greatest proof of the Divine source of the book is that it fits the soul as well as a Chubb's key fits the lock it was made for.... Now I am off to the street with my tent.'

'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 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 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 cinglet 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.

‘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 3_s._2_d._, 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 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 sorrows 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 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 T Ss[)u] 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 cook-shop. 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 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 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 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 bedtime, 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 loss, 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 T Ss[Du] 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 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 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 inworking 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.'

From other letters that remain we catch glimpses of the course of his action and thought during these last weeks. During the year 1869 he met in Edinburgh Mrs. Swan, the widow of one

of the pioneers of the Mongol Mission of 1817 to 1841, and that interview gave the chief direction to the work of his life. In March 1891 he heard of Mrs. Swan's death, and he wrote to Miss Cullen, her niece, the following letter:—

‘I sent you a post-card acknowledging receipt of your kind letter of December 10, saying that Mrs. Swan had passed away on November 22. I had not heard, and just then I had not time to write. I am now at the east end of my district, three days' journey from where the mail reached me.

‘I am much moved to think that letter to me was her last. And there is a fitness that it should be so. “Baptized for the dead,” as the phrase is. In some sense I am successor to her work, and it was not out of keeping that her last letter should have been to the field which all along had such a large place and keen interest in her heart, where so many more good works found a place. I often think of all the kindness and friendship I have experienced at her hands, both on my visits to Edinburgh and through letters. Missionaries miss such lives much when they are removed. I need not speak to you, who knew her so well, of what a charming hostess she made, and of how, even in her old age, all her great and abiding earnestness had running through it all so much happy Scotch humour.

‘I had no idea Mrs. Swan was so old. Eighty-one, she did not look old except about the last time I saw her, and then I had no idea her age was so great. She has gone; but for many years to come, if I am spared, I shall from time to time revisit her in her house in Edinburgh, and see her at the table with the quiet Jane moving noiselessly around, or see her seated at her desk in the corner, writing letters. Remember me very kindly to your

father—fit brother for such a sister. Their separation cannot be very long at the longest. For that matter of it, those of us who are here longest must soon be gone, and when the going comes, or looms before us, let us look not at the going, but at the being _there_.'

Having paid considerable attention to the work and methods of the Salvation Army, the publication of In Darkest England interested him greatly, and on March 9 he sent in a letter the following trenchant criticism, all the more noteworthy because of his strong sympathy with much in the Army that others find it hard to accept.

'Got here Saturday. Had a good Sunday with the Christians. To-day it snowed, and thus we have had time to put our house in order. I have read Booth's scheme in the Review of Reviews. I am greatly puzzled. It is so far a departure from Booth's principle of doing spiritual work only. It reads well, but Booth must know just as well as I do that much of the theory will never work in practice. What I dislike most in it is, it is in spiritual things doing exactly what it attempts to do in secular things—namely, it threatens to swallow up in a great holy syndicate no end of smaller charities which have been and are working efficiently. Again, the finally impenitent are to be cast off. Yes, that is just the rub. It will leave the good-for-nothings, many of them cast out as before. Nor will Booth's despotism do in the long run. But I am for the scheme and for old Booth too; but, nevertheless, there is both a limit and an end to all despotism and despotisms. But I am more favourable to the scheme than these words would seem to indicate.'

Mr. Parker, who bids fair to be a successor after Gilmour's own heart, in his first report of his experiences in Mongolia gave a bright and hopeful view of his colleague.

'On arriving at T Ss[du] 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.

'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.

'Another thing which has taught me a good amount of the Chinese I know is having to give orders to my Chinese boy in house-keeping 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 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.

‘For 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 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 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 T Ss[du] Kou. 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.’

The letters of this period have a very tender and sacred association for all who received them, since they reached England after the telegraphic tidings of James Gilmour's death had brought sorrow to his many friends. They came, in a sense, like a message from one ‘within the veil.’ Some of these refer to the books he was reading, and from which he had derived benefit; some depict phases of his experience; some bear directly upon his work and its needs; all possess the solemn value and are read in the clearer light imparted to them by Death.

The first was written to one of his brothers.

‘Do you know In the Volume of the Book, by Dr. Pentecost? It is A 1. I have just read it. It is not a dear book. Read it, man, by all means. It gives zest to the old Bible. I am reading through the New Testament at about the rate of a gospel a day, or two epistles. Rapid reading has advantages. Close study of minute portions has other advantages. All sorts of reading are valuable. Go for your Bible, brother. There is no end more in it than ever you or I have yet seen. I am going for it both in Chinese and English, and it pays as nothing else does. In Jesus is all fulness. Supply yourself from Him. May the richest blessings be on you from Him! Heaven’s ahead, brother. Hurrah!’

The next was to the Edinburgh correspondent from whose letters we have previously taken extracts.

‘This mail was sent off February 2. It came back the same day. The man was scared by robbers. He leaves to-morrow. We are well. We are idle. Would you believe it? It is Chinese New Year time, and I cannot go on the street with my stand. No people: soon will be. We are thankful for the rest. It won’t last long.... Oh, it is good to have Jesus to tell all to. May He be more of an intimate friend to you and to me! The troubles of this earthly life are not few. How many were Paul’s! I am reading Farrar’s Life and Work of Paul. It puts much new light on the epistles. What a time the man Paul had of it! Yet he called them “light afflictions.” How much lighter are ours! And the same heaven he looked to is for us—the same crown—not to him only, but to all who love the appearing of Christ. You love Him. Rejoice and be glad. I am so glad that

the crown is not only for such as Paul, whom we cannot hope to imitate, but for those (ii. Timothy iv. 8) who have loved His appearing. We do that, don't we? May the joy set before us enable us to endure, when endurance is needed! May your heart rest in Him! May your soul cling to Him! May His light always shine on your path! May I always, even in dark days and dark times, have His light in my heart and soul! Don't regard me as one always on the sunny heights, but as one often cast down, often in much feebleness, in much unworthiness, and falling so far short of my own ideal. But it is good to think that, in Christ, we are perfect, that He makes up all.

'Parker and I read Holy of Holies, when together. It is a good book. Meantime, he and I are three days' journey separate, and may be so for a month to come yet. I hope he likes it. It is a little hard on him, but I had to come here on mission business, and, if needed, will return to him at any time. Looking again at Heb. vi. 4-6.'

His correspondent had asked him about this passage.

'It is said—it is impossible to “renew them again to repentance.” Does it not seem clear that what is described cannot be the case of one who has the repentant heart? I think so decidedly, and that passage has no bearing on the sinner who repents.... No one will come to harm who commits himself to His keeping. And no one will lack leading who has God for his guide. If I could only hear of or from the friends I pray for, that they had given themselves over to God's keeping, I would be at rest and thankful. You are trusting in Him. You will not be ashamed. He will take care to supply every needed blessing at the right time and in the right way.

‘Some day, I believe we shall stand in Eternity and look back on Time. How ashamed we then shall be of any want of trust and of any unfaithfulness! May He help us to look at things now in that light, and how to do as we then shall wish we had done!...

‘I would be glad if you would send me half a dozen copies of the Wordless Book. Two copies fell into the hands of robbers and were thus lost....

‘I shall be glad to have the Life of Faith. You might mark any passages that strike you.’

In a letter to the Rev. J. Paterson, dated April 1, he writes:—

‘It helps me much out here to get the best consecrated literature, and to get it early. Men in the most difficult and dangerous fields should be the best armed and equipped. Some of these books open up new treasures to me in God’s Word. I do not use them in place of God’s Word, but as openers to the treasures.’

In almost the last letter from him received by his brother Alexander and dated April 24, 1891, the following passage occurs:—

‘The Practice of the Presence of God, being conversations and letters of Brother Lawrence. Please send a copy to yourself, John, Matthew, Paterson, Miss Gowan, and ten copies to me, charging all costs to me, of course. It is by a

Roman Catholic: don't imitate his Roman Catholicism, but his practice of the presence of God.'

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 as chairman. 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 T Ss[Du] 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, Saturday, 5 P.M. Our headquarters are just five days from the extended railway. Am in A 1 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. Had it been foreseen that the end was so near, the fervour and impressiveness and help of his presence could hardly have

been increased. Before, however, passing to the details of this last month, the following letters are given in extenso as they form the last lengthy sketches of his work drawn by his own hand.

‘Tientsin, L.M.S.: April 20, 1891.

My dear Mrs. Lovett,—I guess you are at the bottom of 10 1. from Clapham Congregational Church Working Society (Ladies). Ar’n’t you? If so, thanks. If not—I was going to say you ought to be—but my courage fails me. Anyhow, you can read and please forward the enclosed with my best thanks to the friends. I got here two days ago, and am here for a short time. The railway has gone out eastwards, is still going, and has now a station near me in Mongolia—near me being five long days’ journey; but that is near, as near and far go here.

‘I have many grateful and many prayerful remembrances of England and English friends, and a vivid remembrance of your kindness when I was with you. My regards to your parents. I hope you and your husband and children are all well. I heard of Mr. Lovett being in America—American Pictures on the stocks?

‘I had intended to write you a nice letter, but it won’t come, and the letter must go as it is. Please read into the remaining blank sheet all the feelings and good wishes I should express and do feel, and next time I write you, may it not be in the ebb tide, at the end of a mail.

‘Your husband’s a Director. I _do_ hope they are sending me a doctor. If he can do anything in the matter, I wish he would.

‘Yours, dried up and feeling dumb,
‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

Enclosed in the above was the following letter, dated March 10, and addressed to ‘The Clapham Congregational Church Ladies’ Working Society.’

‘Dear Friends,—Many thanks for your handsome donation (10_1_), notice of which has reached me last night. I am told you want to hear from me. All right. I am just back from a month’s raid into Ch’ao Yang. Had a fine time. Good weather and plenty of work in the marketplace. Baptized four adults, three being women—all Chinese. It is the day of small things truly, but I am not a little encouraged, over the women especially. That now makes four Christian families in Ch’ao Yang or its immediate neighbourhood. The two wives baptized this time have Christian husbands. It has all along been our prayer that the unsaved relatives of the saved might be saved.

‘Mrs. Chu’s husband was baptized a couple of years ago. She consented to his taking their two children to me to be baptized, but she herself would have nothing to do with Christianity or Christ. This time she got over her difficulties. I was much pleased, especially as she had annoyed her husband a good deal last year about his having been beaten about his Christianity. She also had her little child baptized. Pray that God may keep and help them in all the many complications

that will arise on account of their Christianity, living as they do in a composite family, the ruling powers of which are heathen.

‘Mrs. Ning is a model wife. They are poor. Her husband cannot dress in good clothes, but is always as neat as a virtuous wife, skilful with her needle, can make him. She mends so neatly. I once discarded a vest (Chinese) and gave it to her husband. He took it home, and later on I saw him swelling about in it quite like a neat old gentleman, though I was almost ashamed to give it him.

‘They have had family worship in their home for a year or two—they say. We went to baptize her. It was such a small, poor house, but so very nice inside. Mother and grown daughters and little girl, with father and grown son, all sleep on a little brick platform, hardly big enough for me—one man. She and the grown daughter support the family by needlework—making horsehair women’s head fittings, which the father sells, when he has nothing more to do.

‘The son is epileptic and can earn nothing, and is, in addition, a great eater. He is a good man and a Christian. As we entered, the son and daughter went out. The mother and little daughter were baptized. The father did not wish his big daughter baptized. When she is married she will get a heathen mother-in-law, who will go for her and make her worship idols. So said the father. In a few days the father came back, saying that out of fear of the coming mother-in-law he had not had his daughter baptized, but that his daughter had pressed him so hard that she was as formidable as the mother-in-law. The daughter says she’ll stick to her God and let them stick to theirs, and so she was baptized. She has a hot time before her.

Chinese mothers-in-law are no joke. Pray for the lassie that:—
(_a_) she may be steadfast; (_b_) she may be wise; (_c_) she
may be gentle in her resistance; (_d_) enabled by God to
endure; and that the mother-in-law may be restrained. God can
do all things.

‘Here, in T Ss[)u] Kou, two of the Christians have wives very
much opposed to Christianity, and give their husbands hot
times. Remember the husbands, please, and all such in their
shoes, in prayer, and may the darkened women themselves be
enlightened. You have no notion how deeply sunk in
superstition the women are. Still another Christian has a wife
whom he has to allow to worship a weasel, because the woman
shows symptoms of being possessed by the beast if she does
not worship it!

‘The other day a woman came to my stand in the market-place,
saying that “Mr. Yellow” troubled her. “Mr. Yellow” turned
out to be the weasel, and she firmly believed her sickness was
due to the beast.

‘We are badly in want of a lady medical man in this district.
Don’t you know of one who would do? Are there none of you
who could study medicine and go out as doctors to some of the
many needy places? Much was hoped for this district from the
late Mrs. Smith, but God took her. Any one who comes here
should have good health, and not fear seclusion from foreign
company. I would suggest that a couple should come, a
medical and a non-medical. There is a house which could be
got for such a couple, only I don’t see how they could get on
without knowing some Chinese. Perhaps some one of the
Peking or Tientsin ladies already speaking Chinese would

volunteer to be a medical lady's companion. Would that God would stir some of you up! Meantime, thanks for the money. Thanks also for the prayers which I take for granted you let us have. You might also pray for a woman who has a very good, quiet, Christian husband, but herself has such a temper that she cannot in decency take on a Christian profession. Eh, man! eh, man! it is curious that I, a widower, should be left to look after women's souls out here, when lots of women are competing for men's situations and businesses at home. I guess things will come right some day, though I may or may not see it.

'Very gratefully,
'Yours sincerely,
'JAMES GILMOUR.'

On May 8 he sent the following note to Mrs. Williams, the wife of the Rev. Mark Williams of the American Board. Their Society happened to be holding its annual meeting at the same time in Tientsin as the London Society. Mr. Gilmour was just entering his fatal illness as he penned these lines, the last, we believe, that he wrote. They are a beautiful testimony to the strength of his affection for the Mongols to whom he and his wife had ministered so well long before, and on whose behalf they had suffered so much and so deeply. Standing as he was on the borderland of the heavenly country, he recalls the hard toil of his early days, and he leaves to those who must carry on to a successful issue, not only his work, but also the great enterprise of winning all China for Jesus Christ, this as a last legacy—the fruit of his prayer, his faith, his toil and his utter self-sacrifice—namely, the conviction that the need of China is

‘good, honest, quiet, earnest, persistent work in old lines and ways.’

‘Tientsin: May 8, Friday.

‘My dear Mrs. Williams,—Thanks for returning the photos. Not having delivered them to you personally, I feared that in the present whirl of people and business they might have been mislaid, or even not reached you.

‘It is a great pleasure to see you here at this time. Many memories of past times and days come up. Though never again likely to see Kalgan, I often in thought go along its narrow, hard streets, and its up and down sideways, call in at your house, see all your faces, even that of the youthful Stephen, and the studious Etta; and often go up over the Pass into the grass land.

‘It is like a rest for a little while beside the palms and wells of Elim to meet you all here.

‘Your peaceful, happy family fills me with gratitude to God. May He bless them all (your children), and lead them not only into paths of peace and pleasantness, but of useful service for Him! You and your husband seem well. May many useful years of ripely experienced labour be yours!

‘Lately, I am being more and more impressed with the idea that what is wanted in China is not new “lightning” methods so much as good, honest, quiet, earnest, persistent work in old lines and ways.

‘With many grateful memories of all old-time Kalgan kindness, and hoping to see a note from you, or Mr. Williams, say once a year or so, and with prayers for you and all Kalgan-wards Mongols,

‘Yours, cheered by the vision of you all, ‘JAMES GILMOUR.’

CHAPTER XII

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, 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 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 to 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?"

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 other 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 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 9 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 to-day. 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 anti-pyretics, 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 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 the hymn 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 T Ss[ü] 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!

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 to-day is to-morrow 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 comes 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 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.

'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 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 carry on 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 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 enquire 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 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).
P’ANG TIEN K’UEI.
WANG SHENG.
NING FU TUNG.
CHANG WAN CH’UAN.
CHANG KUEI.
CHIANG SHENG.
WANG HUI HSIEN.
LIU I (your father’s servant).
SUNG KANG.
CH’U WEN YUAN.
CHANG CHEN.
CHANG MAO CHI.
NING KUANG CHEN.
LIU CHO.
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 oftentimes 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 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 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 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 the 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 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.

PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW STREET SQUARE
LONDON

CHEAP EDITION.

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[Illustration: Sincerely yours James Gilmour]

EDITED AND ARRANGED BY
RICHARD LOVETT, M.A.

_Author of 'Norwegian Pictures,' 'The Printed English Bible,'
'London Pictures,' &c._

PUBLISHED BY THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY, 56
PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

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