

THE FLOWERY KINGDOM.

BITS OF CHINA OLD AND NEW.

THE FRANCISCAN MARTYRS.

The Feast of St. Francis of Assisi was celebrated in Paris in an unprecedented manner at the Franciscan Church of the Rue des Puteaux, erected in honor of St. Anthony of Padua. The feast in question took the form of a Solemn Requiem for the religious of the Franciscan Order, men and women recently massacred or martyred in China. Notwithstanding the church's dirge-like strains and funeral decorations, there was much of a religious festival in this celebration. Alleluias and 'Te Deum' chants seemed to mingle with the strains of the 'Miserere' and the 'De Profundis.' In truth the Church was celebrating that morning the triumph of a fresh contingent of her martyrs. M. Francois Veillot, writing in the *Univers* on this ceremony in the Church of Rue des Puteaux, said: 'Those around the catafalque, enlightened by God, looked higher, and in the victims being mourned saw martyrs in heaven.' The same writer went on to say: 'Chinese paganism, in putting to death the Christians in its midst, has just given itself its own death blow. Its immense empire has remained until now impenetrable, and has resisted the efforts of our apostles and missionaries. But now that the Christians of China with their chiefs have so largely given their lives for their faith, their land is opened up. And the Catholic faith, instead of being burdened there with them, will flourish triumphant on soil rendered fertile by their blood. The Franciscan Order is one of those that have suffered the most by recent events in China. Its latest martyred missionary is the Rev. Pere Theodorico de Saint-Martin de Tour, Missionary-Apostolic in Northern Chan-si since 1884.

AN UNSATISFACTORY EXPERIMENT.

When Chinese affairs became interesting the editor of a leading New York newspaper decided to employ a Chinaman to give an account of passing events in Chinese for the benefit of his countrymen in the United States. The yellow writer was a rather costly addition to the staff, but his contributions were looked forward to with much interest in all parts where Celestials congregate. The Chinese were delighted with what they read, and it was some time before the 'foreign devils,' who also looked upon the strange characters with curiosity, were able to learn the meaning of them. The first article began: 'If these lines meet the eyes of one of our brother Chinamen let him accept the salutation of the author, and let him receive the blessings of the 97 gods. If a dog of a Christian asks him about the present article he should reply that it refers to great battles, ruinous and bloody, between the Japanese and the Chinese. This journal belongs to a cursed Christian, and is not even worthy to be spat upon by a self-respecting Chinaman.' The yellow scribe has ceased to write articles for that newspaper.

THE MISSION AT NAN TONG.

Mrs. Conger, the wife of the American Minister to China, in a long letter to a friend, mentions the firing and persecution of the Catholic mission at Nan Tong by the Boxers, who burned the Cathedral built in 1600. 'This is a grand, wealthy mission,' she writes, 'with its hundreds of people. This mission cared for our smallpox sufferers a year ago. The good work of this large mission was considered wonderful and far-reaching. The Catholics have a still larger mission at Pa Tong and a small one in the east city, which was burned the night before.'

DESTRUCTION OF A MISSION.

The *Times* correspondent at Vienna, writing on October 28, says:—A member of the Catholic religious community the Childhood of Jesus has sent to the president of the association, the Aulic Councillor Dr. Zschotte, an account, dated August 17, of the destruction of the Chinese missions in the province of Kiang-si. After describing how the mission at Kin-te-tchin was demolished he relates what happened at the larger establishment in the town of Yao-chau. The latter consisted of a dwelling-house for the Sisters of Mercy, a church, a hospital for natives, an asylum for old men, an orphanage accommodating 200 children, a girls' school, a separate asylum for old women, and a dispensary for the poor. These buildings were divided by a garden from the house where the priests lived, close to which was a boys' school and a school for adults. The population was not hostile to the mission. The good work of the Sisters of Mercy and the personal benevolence of the Superior had won the hearts of the prefects, sub-prefects, and some of the *litterati*. There were, at the time, over 160 children in the orphanage, and a number of patients and old people in the other establishments. The Mandarins, admitting their good will, were powerless to face the mob, which mustered from 6000 to 7000. The soldiers, who only numbered from 100 to 200, were scarcely to be depended upon, and were only allowed to use their rifles to shoot in the air.

While the missionaries were deliberating on the 21st as how they could save the children and old people, a messenger brought tidings that the mob had broken into the orphanage and hospital. The troops tried to disperse them but to no purpose. It would seem that the Mandarins and sub-prefects had endeavored to help the missionaries to escape, but the Superior was seriously wounded by stones thrown at him by the crowd while the writer and another priest were with great difficulty, assisted by a few soldiers, able to reach one of the military junks, by means of which they crossed the river. While they were crossing they saw their establishment in flames. At midnight they were joined by the Superior and four English Protestant missionaries, with whom they proceeded down the river as far as the Lake of Po-yang, and arrived at Kin-kiang on the afternoon of the 23rd. The writer continues:—

'Thus ended our flourishing mission. Alas for our poor Christians, whose property was plundered and whose houses were burnt! Alas for our poor orphan children who fell a prey to the Chinese!

Two of the poor patients perished in the flames. I would willingly have given my head if I could have saved them and our Christians. . . . There are people in Europe who reproach the missionaries with being the cause of the disturbances. It is true that they are a thorn in the eye of the Chinese Government, which regards them as political agents. But they are looked upon even by the heathen Mandarins as propagators of the truth and comforters of the poor and sick. It is not the spread of religion in itself that has exasperated the indifferent Chinaman, but the well-founded apprehension that his country would fall into the hands of the Europeans. We are in presence of great political events, the beginning of which you will have heard of by telegraph, but of which the end cannot be foreseen. The Catholic missions have received a heavy blow, trade has sunk to a low ebb, and the work of civilisation has become problematical. But religion alone can civilise China. . . . The Chinese Christians are gradually becoming familiar through religion with true civilisation. They respect and like the nation which makes it a point of honor to protect Christianity. In the midst of persecution they hold fast to their faith, and hope for help and peace from the Almighty and the protecting European Powers.'

HEBEOIC DEATH OF TWO MARIIST BROTHERS.

Brother Cleophas, writing from Peking on August 24 to the Superior-General of the Mariist Order, gives the following account of the death of two Mariist Brothers:—At last our deliverance has come; it was effected on the 13th inst., after a terrible siege of two months, in the course of which we have lost our dear Brother Visitor and our regretted Brother Joseph Felicite, both meeting their deaths in the discharge of heroic deeds and works of charity. I can only narrate briefly this double occurrence. Brother Jules Andre, Visitor, who met his death on August 12, had with several other Brothers taken refuge at Pe-tang, the portion of the city in which are situated the Catholic Cathedral and the institutions of the Lazarist Missionary Fathers, as well as those of the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul. At 5 o'clock in the morning he heard Mass and received Holy Communion in the chapel of the Sisters' Orphanage, and was in the act of assisting at another, when suddenly a dreadful explosion took place which filled all who were present with terror. A mine of dynamite was fired, and the explosion blew away a great portion of the orphanage, but the chapel providentially escaped. We left the chapel immediately to render assistance to those who would need it. The Brother Visitor hearing the groans of a woman proceeding from the midst of the smoking debris, advanced courageously to render her assistance, though bullets fell about like hail. But alas! he was struck almost at once with one that penetrated the right side, grazed the heart, and passed right through his body. Brother Marie-Nizier rushed to his aid and endeavored to raise him from where he had fallen, but found that he was already dead. This happened at half-past six.

Brother Joseph Felicite likewise fell a victim of devotedness. On the 15th of July it was discovered that the Chinese were laying a mine, and that already they had excavated as far as the buildings in the missionary quarter. An effort was made forthwith to counter-tail the nefarious plans of the enemy, and Brother Felicite was chosen to direct the works. On the 18th the workmen had only to dig down another 50 centimetres (about 20 inches) when the mine exploded, burying in the ruins it made 20 of the workers, wounding 25 others, and throwing to a considerable distance the devoted Brother who was directing the sinking operations. After the lapse of a quarter of an hour he was found among the ruins, and although apparently he had only received a slight wound in the head, yet he was found to be already dead. Thus perished, or rather met a glorious death, these two worthy members of the Congregation, who fell victims and martyrs to their courage, devotedness, and charity.

In the Sisters' property four mines were laid, two of which proved disastrous, and so turned a great portion of their buildings into a pile of ruins. The Lazarist Fathers escaped being undermined, but their dwellings and basilica have suffered great havoc.

ENGLAND AND CHINA.

The integrity of China could only be preserved (says the *London Tablet*) by an international compact stringently enforced by a joint and several guarantee. Since no such guarantee can or will be given, the process of partition already in progress must go on. That it is entirely contrary to the interests of this country is unfortunate, but cannot be remedied by refusing to look facts in the face. The commercial interests of England in China are so vast as to be necessary to her prosperity—we had almost said to her existence. Two-thirds of the trade of Lancashire are carried on with it, and many of its looms are working half-time in consequence of its partial cessation. In Bombay, which supplies the Far East with the bulk of the yarn woven there, many mills are closed and operatives starving owing to the same catastrophe. The whole foreign trade of China in 1897 amounted to 235 millions (of Haikwan taels) with Great and Greater Britain, as compared with 105 with the rest of the world. Out of 10,855 foreign residents, 4362 were British, and out of 672 foreign firms, 363. But these figures are but a fraction of those which would represent the increased intercourse of the future with the largest unopened market in the world. In an independent and united China, the commercial position of England was secure, since, despite many hindrances to trade, all nations were on equal terms with regard to it. Its partition, on the other hand, would result in her exclusion by preferential tariffs from the spheres of her rivals. Hence, if the integrity of China, the ideal of her statesmen and merchants, cannot be maintained, she is bound in self-defence to secure a portion of its territory for herself, under penalty of being shut out of its entire area. The policy of the so-called 'open door' is an illusory alternative, since foreign nations will never admit her goods to compete on equal terms with their own within territories monopolised by them.