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American Board of Commissioners for  
Foreign Missions.

# THE FOOCHOW MISSION.

1847-1905.

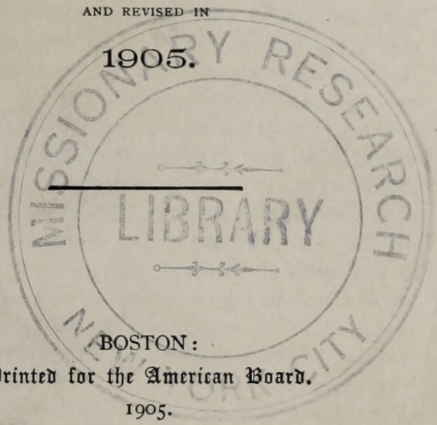
A CONDENSED SKETCH.

PREPARED

By Rev. C. C. <sup>aleb</sup> BALDWIN, D.D.,

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## CONDENSED SKETCH OF THE FOO- CHOW MISSION, 1847-1905.

BY REV. C. C. BALDWIN, D.D., OF FOOCHOW.

LOCATION. — The centre of the mission is at the city of Foochow, about in longitude  $119^{\circ}$  east. latitude  $26^{\circ}$  north, corresponding to the southern part of Florida. The city is situated two miles from the north bank of the river Min, 25 miles from the sea. It is a walled city with seven gates, and is from six to seven miles in circuit. A main thoroughfare, with a few sharp turns, runs from the north to the south gate, then southward across two bridges with an intervening island, a distance in all of seven miles. This street expands into very extensive suburbs on the two banks of the stream. The population of the city, with suburbs, is estimated at 750,000. It stands on the north side of a fertile plain, traversed by two channels of the river, and covered with many villages, which contain their hundreds and thousands of people. The whole population of city, suburbs, and plain is

about one and a half millions. The population of the province of Fuh-kien in which it is situated is estimated at from fifteen to twenty or twenty-five millions.

Foochow, like other cities of its rank, is important as the political, literary, and commercial centre of the province. It is the official residence of the provincial officers, the viceroy of the Fuh-kien and Chehkiang provinces, governor, treasurer, criminal judge, the two district magistrates who have jurisdiction over the city and adjacent territory, etc. From eight to ten thousand students come from all parts of the prefecture twice in two years to compete for the first degree (A. B.) before the chancellor, and about the same number from the whole province twice in five years to compete for the second degree (A. M.) before imperial commissioners.

COMMERCE. — The commercial importance of the city is indicated by its large interior and coast trade, and its trade with foreign countries in teas, opium, cotton and woolen goods, rice, etc. In 1887 its direct foreign trade was about \$13,000,000, and its net foreign imports about \$4,500,000. Its export of teas was 82,000,000 pounds. This was about four times that of Canton, while in some other items it falls much below that city. The opium imported in 1887

was 5,000 *piculs*, costing \$3,000,000. The cost of both the foreign importation and the native-grown opium was about \$9,000,000, or three eighths of what it received for its teas.

THE PEOPLE. — The Chinese are sometimes stigmatized by Western people as stupid because undemonstrative toward strangers. One writer declares that they are “the largest, oddest, and most absurd of the social organizations now existing.” But in truth they rank high as a race in their mental endowments. They are impassive in temperament, and although deficient in push, and seemingly slow and inefficient, they are plodding and patient, accomplishing great results. The Chinese mind is solid rather than brilliant or metaphysical as compared with the East Indian. Nevertheless Chinamen are gifted with artifice in social and political affairs. They lack originality, but excel in memory and method. They are remarkably industrious, frugal, and temperate. In the civilities of life the Chinese are polite and affable, their manners being largely patterned after the Rules in the “Book of Rites,” dating back to B.C. 1130. The bearing of the better classes is usually quiet, dignified, and self-respecting, but politeness too often is only a thin veneer covering utter indifference or dislike.

HABITS AND MORALS. — Their ethical system has been a strong national bond during the lapse of centuries. The roots of this system are in the doctrine of *Filial Piety* and what they term the “Five Human Relations.” All rules are based on these, and hence result their strong family ties and intense clannishness. But, however beautiful their moral system may be, it does not control the life. Descending from their ideal standards to the actual life, the shadows we meet deepen to blackness. Beginning with a lighter “shade,” not strictly classed as moral, uncleanness is common. Yards and houses, particularly in country places, are occupied by poultry and swine, while yards are also the feeding and lodging places of larger cattle. “Beds and clothing are so commonly infested with vermin that it ceases to be a disgrace.” (Nevius.) The smoking of tobacco is universal, and the opium-pipe is used to a fearful extent by high and low, from the mandarin to the lowest beggar. The people in their language are very abusive and vile. The most ribald expressions and curses are used by both sexes in the streets. In private life they are depraved in their tastes and conduct, which is often as true of the outwardly refined as of the vulgar crowd, and obscene talk and secret deeds of evil are

but registers of the habitual mental state. The *duplicity* of the Chinese has passed into a proverb. Confucius used deception as though it had no moral character. The national conscience is drugged with false ideas, both from ancient writers and the heathen systems. It is not therefore strange that the standard is low in actual life, and that in regard to duplicity there is no principle of honor and no sense of shame. They are also intensely selfish and materialistic, having little that is spiritual in aim or aspiration.

THEIR RELIGION.— The three religions or sects are Confucianism, Taoism or Rationalism, and Buddhism. The first is strictly a political and moral, rather than a religious system. Taoism also was originally a system of morality and virtue, but its votaries deified reason in the person of its founder, Lau-tsz, and have finally degenerated into low idolaters, jugglers, and mountebanks. Buddhism was originally atheistic, humane and moral, but Buddha was deified, and kindred gods introduced. In a wide sense, all the sects are polytheistic. Confucianism is made to embrace the gods and rites of state worship at the capital, and similar worship by officers throughout the empire. The august ceremonial at the capital is enacted by the

emperor as the vice-gerent and son of heaven, assisted by princes and high officers, with an escort of two thousand grandees, musicians, and other attendants. The huge pantheons of state worship and the sects comprise objects high and low, real and imaginary, from "Imperial Heaven and Earth" to the sun, moon, and stars, the spirits of rulers and sages, rain, clouds, and thunder, mountains, seas, and rivers. The catalogue embraces the national tablet-worship of ancestors, and such inferior deities as gods of flags, cannon, ways and gates, down to the gods of the kitchen and the dustpan. The number of the gods of the three sects is immense. There are over one million temples, containing ten million idols and tablets, costing the people one thousand million dollars. But the entire expense of worship in temples, houses, and streets, and the consequent deterioration of morals, it is utterly impossible to estimate.

It is a significant fact that the sects, in popular practice, are not rival or antagonistic, but friendly and supplementary. The devotee is quite free in his selection, choosing his gods and rites at pleasure. If one god fails, he tries another. In his need, however, he does not apply to Confucius, but to some filthy idol or

senseless charm. This free custom pervades all classes, for the proud Confucianist seems as superstitious as the most vulgar and lowly. With no thought of shame or fear of compromising his orthodoxy, he engages eagerly in the most puerile service, led by priests of Tao or Buddha, while emperor and ministers contribute large sums to heathen temples. The worship of deceased ancestors in the tablet has the profound reverence and trust of the nation. In the popular belief, this involves the very existence of filial piety in their minds. No one laughs at it, nor dares to neglect it; for it goes to the deepest source of a felt obligation, which can be neither questioned nor trifled with. There are some sixty million families in the empire, and as each often has three to five tablets of near and remote ancestors, or their names inscribed on a single block, the worshiped spirits are hundreds of millions. It is a refined worship, without the grosser forms of heathenism, but it forms one of the subtlest phases of idolatry—essentially evil with the guise of goodness—ever established among men. (Williams's *The Middle Kingdom*.) The doctrine of filial piety has been lauded in glowing terms in their books, but it has been perverted to very low aims, for the spirit of the



worship is a selfish one. The very strongest motive for such worship is due to "the belief that worldly success depends on the support given to ancestral spirits in Hades, who would resent neglect by withholding their blessing." Besides, vast multitudes of these spirits, when in the flesh, were doubtless the most debased and wicked of mortals, yet they receive the careful homage of centuries, not that the filial petitioner may grow in virtue, but that he may prosper in life. Satan has many masterpieces. In China his greatest is ancestral worship.

#### THE MISSION OF THE AMERICAN BOARD.

From 1847 to 1857. The mission was founded January 2, 1847. Beginnings were made in acquiring and Romanizing the language, obtaining sites for dwellings, renting Chinese shops for chapels, starting schools, taught at first by heathen teachers, and in evangelical work. A small boarding school for boys and girls, to which day scholars were also admitted, was begun in 1853 or 1854. It was not till near the close of this decade, October 19, 1857, that the first church was formed of four members, though the wife of one of these had previously received baptism on her deathbed. In these early years we sometimes received harsh treat-

ment in country places, missiles, such as small stones, broken tiles, etc., being thrown at us.

From 1857 to 1867. The work extended during this period. A site for two new houses was secured within the city walls in 1861, and the buildings erected in 1862. The boys' boarding and training school, after several years' intermission, was resumed in 1864. An experiment was made in the training of three girls in mission families, and a girls' boarding school was regularly organized in 1863. It actually began with *one* girl; but, at the end of seven years, twenty-five girls and three women had been under instruction. This decade is also noted for the completion of a translation of the New Testament in the Foochow dialect by a committee of four from the two American missions, the first uniform edition being issued in 1866. The evangelical work spread from the city and suburbs to the department cities and districts of Ch'angloh and Yung-fuh, forming a compact field from the sea, on the south of the Min, about one hundred miles into the interior, with a varying breadth of twenty to thirty-five miles.

From 1867 to 1877. After an intermission of one or two years, the boys' boarding school was resumed. Successful tours of exploration were

Kiang-Si Province



MAP OF THE FOOCHOW MISSION PROVINCE

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PROVINCE OF FUH-KIEN, CHINA.

made by missionaries and native helpers in the upper Min region; and in 1874 a permanent location was effected in the prefectural city of Shao-wu, 250 miles from Foochow, and only two or three days' travel from the Kiang-si province. Out-stations at the town of Yang-keu and the city of Tsiang-loh had been previously secured. The work was prosecuted in the new field a part of the time by two missionary families and a part of the time by one. No medical missionary was stationed at Shao-wu till the last year of the decade. This period is also noted for the commencement of medical work at Foochow in 1870. In the literary department, two important works were completed: the Foochow Dictionary in Chinese and English, and a manual of the Foochow dialect. In their preparation a small share of the work was done by a member of the Methodist mission, and the books were issued from its press. The translation of the Old Testament, begun in 1874, was not completed till the next period. This heavy task was undertaken by the American and English missions together, but much the larger part of the work was done by two members of our mission.

From 1877 to 1887. This was an eventful period in the history of the mission. At its

beginning there were in the mission 17 out-stations and nine organized churches. There was the beginning of a native pastorate, two men having been ordained in 1877. The Shao-wu station was occupied by two missionaries and a physician, with their wives. A few gave up their idols for Christ. The advance was made though the working force was very small. In Foochow City a new building for the girls' boarding school, bearing the name "American Board Female College," in Chinese characters, was built and dedicated in 1881. A woman's school, begun in 1885 in narrow quarters in the suburbs, was removed to the city, and soon found a new, comfortable home. This period also witnessed the founding of a "Hospital for Women and Children" in the city, opened January 1, 1886. Building enterprises for a new woman's hospital and for the boys' boarding and training school were undertaken, which involved much patient engineering to secure seventeen deeds of small parcels of land from greedy Chinese owners.

Two notable events also occurred, affecting our work in different ways. One was the founding of an Anglo-Chinese college by the Methodist Mission in 1880, in which the English language and Western sciences are taught.

Students were invited from "the other missions." In response to this invitation, and with the prospect of securing lucrative situations in *hongs* and offices through knowledge of English, from ten to twenty of our lads and young men having entered the college. Some or all of these would naturally have remained with us and received training to become preachers or teachers. Their departure was of course authorized by their parents. The other event was the French invasion of 1884, in which their gunboats destroyed the Chinese fleet near the arsenal, ten miles below Foochow, and silenced or demolished the river forts as they retired. This caused tremendous excitement and distress even in places distant from the scene of action. But good came from the evil, as the people now have a clearer sense of the friendly aim and disposition of missionaries.

From 1887 to 1897. This decade shows rapid progress, in which our mission was called to build rather than to lay foundations. In 1891 Pagoda Anchorage, which is ten miles down the river from Foochow, was made a station. Six years later it had two outstations, giving access to a population of about half a million. In the "Tabular Views" the columns

of total of native laborers, average congregations, adherents, church members, pupils, etc., show gains often of thirty, forty, and even fifty per cent. in single years.

During this period the Christian Endeavor movement made notable progress. The first society, which was the earliest in all China, had been started in 1885. That was in the "Church of the Saviour," or first Congregational church, in the Foochow Suburbs. Other societies have been formed inside the city and in various places in the cities and the country near and remote, where our schools and evangelist work have opened the way. There is also a *Junior* Society in the Girls' Boarding School. There have been grand rallies of these societies at our annual meetings in 1893, 1894, and 1895, with charming displays of distinctive banners, with reports of the leaders, brief addresses, and stirring songs of praise. There has been, with all, a good measure of innocent youthful and adult enthusiasm. And in this connection there have also been revival meetings, with good results, especially in the Girls' School.

The period is also marked by two other hopeful movements, one of which was the formation of a Woman's Home Missionary Society, in



1893. Our most intelligent Chinese women welcome this new enterprise with much faith and devotion of spirit. The other movement is among the young men of the Boy's Boarding School. Those who are judged competent by the principal of the school and the city pastor form a class of workers under the name of "Exhorters," who go out on Sabbath days through the suburbs and the nearer villages to teach the people the way of salvation.

1897 to 1905. At the beginning of this period the station of Inghok, 35 miles southwest of Foochow, was opened. It had previously been a center of 11 outstations, giving access to a population of about 200,000. In 1898 the name of the institution which had been known for eight years as the Banyan City Scientific Institute was changed to Foochow College. This college is just within the city wall, three miles from the foreign settlement. It has two departments, an academic and collegiate, each having a four years' course. In 1904 it had 130 students, all paying liberal fees. In the last ten years it has graduated 33 young men, of whom 21 have entered upon distinctively Christian work.

The Foochow Girls' College is the outgrowth

of a day school begun in 1854, its full course of study having been introduced in 1882. Its highest enrollment was in 1899, having then 100 pupils, and in that year the course of study, including a preparatory and a collegiate department of four years each, was established.

At the time of the Boxer outbreak in North China, in 1900, there was much excitement throughout the Fuhkien province, and massacres were threatened at Foochow, but none actually occurred. In the absence of the missionaries from Shao-wu their premises were looted and burned.

#### DEPARTMENTS OF THE WORK.

*Evangelistic work* is carried forward with the aid of native helpers at chapels, schools, hospitals, and in Christian homes as centers, throughout cities and wide districts of country. Scores of villages, hidden among hills, as well as those thickly clustered by rivers and over plains, are reached by pioneer touring.

*The Educational Department.* — Aside from the two colleges already named, there are two theological classes, three high schools for boys and five for girls, besides 119 common schools. Through all sorts of obstacles quite unknown in

Christian lands, these schools are advancing to an assured success. It is by their influence, in a good measure, that light is gradually dissipating heathen superstitions. For example, during many long years of our history, the Chinese declared that *girls* were taken into our schools to be sent West, or by some occult art made into opium. But we do not often now hear such silly speeches.

The *medical work* has increased greatly within the past fifteen or twenty years. The three medical men and four medical women connected with the Board are accomplishing great results in Christian as well as in humanitarian lines. They have under their charge four hospitals and eight dispensaries, and during the last year these had under their care over 39,000 patients. Young men and women are also in training for efficient practice among their people.

The *literary work*. Tracts and books in poetry and prose, a catechism, hymn-books, a child's paper (in concert with the Methodist Episcopal Mission) have been published. The whole Bible has been translated into the colloquial, in union with the other missions. Elementary treatises in arithmetic, geography, and astronomy, a work on anatomy, and a dic-

tionary and manual of the Foochow dialect (the last two works with the aid of a member of the Methodist Episcopal Mission) have been published.

The field thus sketched covers large regions in the Foochow and Shao-wu districts, and the population, in the providence of God, within reach of our mission mounts up into the millions. The natural facilities for prosecuting the work in certain large sections are favorable. The people like to build on plains and in valleys, and we thus find them densely massed in cities and villages with close connections by waterways or stone-paved roads. This renders them easy of access in large numbers to the missionary. The encouragements to labor, even from the peculiar traits of the people, are many, while the difficulties are also great. We rejoice that the heathen Chinese finds his way at last to the cross of Christ.

#### OTHER MISSIONS.

Besides our own mission, two others are working in the same field — the American Methodist Episcopal Mission and the English Church Mission. All three center at Foochow, and have carried their work through the prov-

ince in all directions, excepting the south-western portion, which has been long occupied by the Amoy and Swatow missions. A spirit of harmony prevails.

An event ever memorable in the record of our missionary experiences was the massacre of English missionaries, August 1, 1895, at Hwasang, a mountain hamlet, twelve miles from Kucheng, one of the district cities of the Foochow prefecture. The English Mission had two houses at this place for summer resort. A society of the sect of "vegetarians," intensely anti-foreign and lawless, and in open feud with the local authorities, apparently had solemnly sworn before their idol gods to kill the foreigners. They assaulted and killed nine adults connected with the English Church Mission. This sad event will always be a marked one in our missionary calendar. Even now we see that it has helped to spread Christian truth in this dark land. The Lord reigns, and he well knows how to bring good out of the evil.

At the beginning of 1905 the mission had five stations with 96 outstations. There were 37 American missionaries, — 12 men, 9 wives, and 16 unmarried women; of these seven are physicians. There are 82 churches, 12 of them

entirely self-supporting. The native laborers connected with the mission number 292, of whom 87 are pastors or preachers, and there are 156 places for regular preaching.

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