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Narrative of Massacres in Shansi,

JULY, 1900.

By the Rev. R. C. FORSYTH.

*WITH INTRODUCTION BY E. H. EDWARD, M.B.Edin.
AND REV. TIMOTHY RICHARD.*

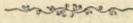
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INTRODUCTION.

Having lived in Taiyuanfu, Shansi, for fifteen years, and having known the Evangelist Chao for the whole of that period, and having cross-questioned him minutely, I believe the following account by the Rev. R. C. Forsyth of his journey to Shansi in search of information concerning the missionaries and Chinese Christians there massacred to be substantially correct.

E. H. Edward, M.B.Edin.

Chefoo, 15th November.

I am glad that Mr. Forsyth has written out a complete narrative of the journey to Shansi province in search of the missing missionaries. He has got it from Mr. Chao, a brave, noble fellow and thoroughly reliable, who has been working there as an Evangelist for about 20 years. The whole narrative shows how the country was completely upset by this anti-foreign crusade of the Government. When the central Government is unfriendly, the whole country becomes unfriendly, and when the Government is really friendly then the whole country becomes friendly.

*Timothy Richard,
English Baptist Mission.*

Shanghai, 20th November.

Narrative of Massacres in Shansi,

JULY, 1900.

Diary of Journey to Shansi Province in Search of the Missing Missionaries, beginning 12th September, 1900.

On the 12th of September two messengers, Chao and Wang, left the city of Ch'engchoufu in Shantung to make enquiry as to the fate of missionaries in Shansi, especially those belonging to the English Baptist Mission working in that province.

One of these messengers, named Chao, had been in the employ of the E.B.M. for many years. His native place was near Ch'engchoufu city in Shantung, but he had been employed in connection with the mission, first by the Rev. T. Richard (now of Shanghai) when he lived in T'aiyuanfu, and subsequently by Rev. H. Dixon of the same Mission, who till recently was working in Hsuichou, about 40 miles from the capital of that province.

This man Chao had been with Mr. Dixon on the 29th June last, when the missionaries in Hsuichou made their escape from that city. He had, after much entreaty, been persuaded by Mr. Dixon to leave the party and endeavour to escape, which he did, finally reaching his home near Ch'engchoufu. He was, however, asked to return, which he cheerfully consented to do, as one knowing the whole district well and being in every respect a thoroughly reliable and intelligent man. Wang accompanied Chao to help him on his difficult task.

On the 13th of September, the messengers reached Ch'angshan, in Shantung, where they saw the heads of three Boxers stuck on poles outside the city gates.

On the 15th of September, they reached Chinanfu, where they found everything quiet, strict search being made for Boxers by orders of the Governor Yuan Shih-kai.

On the 19th of September, they reached Tungch'angfu, where their baggage was overhauled by soldiers, but they were allowed to pass without further molestation. The city was in considerable confusion owing to the quarrelling of the officials amongst themselves.

On the 20th of September, they reached Fangchiachuang; here the condition of things was very disorderly and everybody was more or less in terror owing to the general confusion.

On the 21st of September, Feihsianghsien in Chihli was their stopping place. Here they heard that the Catholics in Kuangpingfu had been suffering terribly. Two priests were said to have been removed to Taimingfu and there killed; about 70 Catholic Christians had been murdered, some having been previously severely beaten to make them recant and their property was seized by the official.

On the 22nd of Sept., they passed through Hantanhsien. There they met a number of soldiers fleeing, it was said, from Peking. These men were looting and destroying property in all the towns and villages they passed through.

On the 23rd of September, they arrived at Wungan. Here they found that the Catholics had been burnt out. The priests were reported to have fled to Mach'eng, about 20 li from Lunganfu, where there was a fortified camp held by Catholic priests. In Wungan city, they found a society called Lienchuanghui (connected village sect) composed of bands of villagers from many places round specially formed to destroy Catholicism wherever found.

On the 24th of September at Shehsien, they found that the dwellings of the Catholics had been looted and destroyed and that the Christians had fled to the mountains.

On the 25th of September, they passed through Tungyangkuan on the borders of Honan. Here they heard of two men dressed as soldiers and carrying fire-arms, who were said to be going from Pingyangfu in Shansi to Tungch'angfu in Shantung. These men had been seized and searched and a letter in foreign characters was found on them. They were sent to Lunganfu, where they were still detained at the time of our messengers' return journey.

On the 26th of September, they got to Luch'enghsien, the station which the Rev. E. J. Cooper, Miss Rice and Miss Huton of the C.I.M. had formerly occupied. Here they found all the houses of the foreigners had been looted and destroyed and that the foreigners had fled.

About 20 li from Luchenghsien, they heard that the Catholics had fortified a place called Mach'eng and had over 1,000 native Christians in their settlement. They were holding out against siege by 500 Imperial troops and a large number of Boxers.

At Lunganfu, 40 li off, the goods of the foreigners had been looted and their houses destroyed. The native Christian missionaries had fled.

On the 28th of September, as they halted for their mid-day meal, they heard of a place called Chaochialing where Catholics were also entrenched. They were being besieged, but were holding out. When our messengers returned they were still holding out, but were said to be in great straits.

On the 29th of September at a place called Shiht'ing, there were a number of Boxers who looked suspiciously at our messengers, but they by putting on a bold front were able to pass on safely.

On the 1st of October, they arrived at Ch'ihhsien, 140 li from T'aiyuanfu city. At T'aiiku, 30 li from Chihhsien, is a station of the American Board Mission, and our messengers heard of the fate of the missionaries stationed there. It was said that seven foreigners were beheaded and the heads taken to T'aiyuanfu and given to the Governor who gave them some tens of taels for their trouble. The houses of the missionaries had been all looted and destroyed.

They heard at the same time of the murder of eight foreigners at Fenchoufu, also a station of the American Board Mission. This news was given the messengers by a man named Hsu Ching-so, a member of the China Inland Mission at Pingyao, a native Christian of ten years' standing. He stated that all the foreigners had been murdered after being promised protection by the magistrate. The foreigners' houses had been burned after being looted. Many of the native Christians had been killed, especially in a place called Hsiaoi.

On the 3rd of October they reached Hsükou (or Sukou), about 80 li from T'aiyuanfu. They found that here Catholics and Boxers had been fighting. The local official was a friendly one and had been able to save the mission buildings from destruction.

On the 4th of October the messengers arrived at Hsiaotientzu, a place 10 li from the capital of Shansi, where there had been an out-station of the English Baptist Mission under the care of Mr. Farthing. Here they found that a Christian named Wu, an old man over 60 years of age, had when trouble broke out drowned himself in his own well, being unable to escape; others had fled. They heard that to the west of Feng river 150 Catholic Christians had been killed.

Massacre of 44 Foreigners at T'aiyuanfu, 9th July, 1900.

As Mr. Chao was well known in T'aiyuanfu it was thought prudent for him not to go there, but he found that Mr. Farthing's helper, a man named Liu Hsi-tei, who had been connected with the English Baptist Mission for many years, was still alive and in the village at the time, he was sent for.

His narrative of the massacre and its attendant circumstances was first hand, as he was with Mr. Farthing up to within a few days of his death and received from him some mission account books which our messengers did not think wise or safe to bring with them. Mr. Liu Hsi-tei stated that

on 27th June a mob suddenly assembled in front of the Schofield memorial hospital built by Dr. Edwards of the Shaoyang mission. Dr. Edwards and family were in England on furlough, but his place was occupied by Dr. Lovitt, who was there at the time. The hospital buildings were destroyed by the mob and burned, and Miss Coombs, who in the confusion of flight was not able to get away with the others was burned in the building. Those who were able to escape fled to Mr. Farthing's house. On the 28th and 29th of June, the foreigners consulted about sending to the Yamèn and were preparing a formal request for protection from the Governor which was however, never sent. On the 30th June four deputies from the Governor's Yamèn came and told them that the city was in a bad state, and that the Governor could not protect them unless they came to a place which he had provided for them, and where they would be safe. They were then taken to a house in a street called Chout'ou-h'siang, where all the foreigners in the city, including the Catholic priests, and afterwards the members of the Shaoyang mission, were all confined and strictly guarded by soldiers. On the 9th July the prisoners were taken to the front of the Governor's Yamèn, an open space abutting on the main street. They were then each stripped to the waist, as is usual for condemned criminals about to be beheaded. The Governor came out and had them all ranged in a line in front of him. He asked them where they came, and one of them answered, from "T'aying-kwo," the official title for England. At this he laughed scornfully and then stepped forward, and with his own sword struck off the heads of three of the prisoners. The soldiery then immediately butchered the others. Their heads were cut off, placed in cages and stuck on poles in front of the Yamèn and the bodies were dragged away by the official underlings and buried as criminals are usually buried.

The names of those who suffered martyrdom at this time were as follows:—
Of the Shaoyang Mission brought to T'aiyuanfu were—

3. Mr. and Mrs. T. W. Pigott and son.
1. Mr. J. Robinson, tutor to Mr. Pigott's son.
1. Miss Duval, also employed as teacher in Mr. Pigott's household.
2. Two daughters of the Rev. E. R. Atwater, of the American Board at Fenchoufu, who were staying with the Pigotts at the time.

This last fact, however, our messengers did not hear, as probably their informants did not know of it, but we have it from another authentic source.

This makes seven in all who were taken to T'aiyuanfu from Shaoyang, which is situated seventy miles from the provincial capital.

Of the same mission, stationed in T'aiyuanfu city were—

2. Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Stokes.
1. Miss Coombs (burnt in hospital buildings).
2. Mr. J. Simpson and wife.
3. Mr. A. E. Lovitt, M. R. C. S., wife and child.

Of the British and Foreign Bible Society were—

5. Rev. W. F. Beynon, wife and three children.
1. Mr. A. Hoddle, an independent worker.

Of the C. I. Mission from Pingyang, who were in T'aiyuanfu at the time, were.—

- 3 Mr. W. Millar Wilson, M.B., Mrs. Wilson and child.

Of the English Baptist Mission stationed in T'aiyuanfu were—

5. Rev. G. B. Farthing, wife and three children.
1. Miss E. M. Stewart, governess to Mr. Farthing's children.
2. Rev. S. F. Whitehouse and Mrs. Whitehouse.

There were two visitors at Mr. Farthing's, Miss M. E. Clark and Miss Stevens, from H'ochao, a place 150 li from Pingyanfu. The total number of persons murdered is thus 34, to which must be added 7 from T'aiiku and a number (said to be 10) of Catholic priests, making in all 51, or the exact number for whose execution Yü Hsien claimed to be rewarded, as was found out after the relief of Peking. Besides these Europeans, 60 or 70 native Christians were murdered about the same time in T'aiyuanfu.

The Rev. T. I. Underwood, of T'aiyuanfu, was with his wife at the station of the English Baptist Mission at Hsuichou, and shared the fate of the missionaries there, so that his name does not appear in this list.

The foreign-built residences were all looted and destroyed, except Mr. Farthing's premises, which were merely wrecked and not burned, as they were rented.

Massacre of Eight British Missionaries at Hsinchou, 25th July.

At the time of our messenger's arrival in the vicinity of T'aiyuanfu the Emperor and Empress had passed through in their flight to Hsianfu, in Shensi. The former Governor of T'aiyuanfu, Yü Hsien, had been appointed commander of Imperial troops, and his place as Governor of the capital of Shansi had been given to a Manchu named Hsi Liang. As our messenger, Mr. Chao, was so well-known in Hsinchou, where he had left Mr. Dixon only three months previously, he did not himself venture to go there, as the country was still disturbed and it would have meant almost certain death. He, however, commissioned Mr. L'u Hsei-tei, Mr. Farthing's helper, and his fellow traveller, Wang Yeng, a stranger to the place, to proceed to Hsinchou, which is about 45 miles north of T'aiyuanfu city, where was the other station of the English Baptist Mission in the province. The messenger took explicit directions and letters from Mr. Chao, and arrived at Hsinchou on the 6th of October last.

Here the messengers found a man who had been employed by Mr. Dixon as a letter messenger, not a Christian, but of good repute as a reliable and faithful man. This man, Ts'ui Chen-pao, gave the information that an evangelist named Ts'ui Lun, who had been in Mr. Dixon's employ for over ten years, was alive and in hiding. Means of communication were found with this man, who knew all the circumstances. He stated that the Rev., H. and Mrs. Dixon, the Rev. W. A. and Mrs. McCurragh, the Rev. T. J. and Mrs. Underwood, Miss B. Renaut and the Rev. S. W. Eunals, eight persons in all, were in Hsinchou on the 29th of June last. On that day the letter messenger, who had gone to T'aiyuanfu, returned, not having delivered his letters, with the news of the burning of the Hospital in that city. On hearing this news, the missionaries immediately decided to fly for their lives. Mr. Chao was with them at the time of flight. The missionaries had two horses, two carts and a mule litter to carry them, and left the city without molestation. They got in safety to a place called Hsiahopei, about 10 miles off, where they stopped

at noon to get some food and rest the animals and themselves. The party then proceeded, but they had not gone far before an uproar occurred, as it became known that the party were wanted by the Hsinchou magistrate. Mr. Dixon gave Mr. Chao some silver and persuaded him to fly for his life, and get if possible to the coast. The party reached in the evening a place called Linchiashan, where some native Christians were living, and took refuge in the house of a man named Ngan Wan-nin. This man's house was hollowed out of the hill side at the head of a narrow valley with high hills on either side, and, if properly provisioned and helped, the foreigners might have held out for a considerable time.

As it was, they were for over a fortnight in the place without molestation. About that time, however, their retreat was discovered by the Boxers, and the inhabitants of the village including all the people with whom they had been staying, fled. Mr. Dixon's party then probably also took to the mountains, where they were said to have been five days without food. On the 25th of July a military official and soldiers from Hsinchou arrived and opened up communication with the party, promising them a safe escort to the coast. On this the missionaries returned with them to Hsinchou. They were brought before the magistrate, who put them in the common gaol.

On the 9th August, after the arrival of a deputy and ten soldiers from T'aiyuanfu with special instructions from the Governor, the missionaries were informed that they were to be escorted to the coast. Four carts were brought and two persons were placed in each, the usual custom in travelling. They were then taken to the first or inner gate of the city, where they were met, as evidently by previous arrangement it was intended, by a number of Boxers. The carts were stopped, the occupants dragged out, stripped naked, both men and women, their heads cut off and bodies cut in pieces, and taken to the bank of the river and thrown down in the open, where they were shamefully abused by the rowdies of the neighbouring village

of Wangchiachuang. Afterwards, one of the gentry of the city, named Chou, hired some men to place the bodies in matting and bury them at the foot of the city wall just outside the city.

All the goods of the foreigners were looted, but it seems that a new building erected by Mr. Dixon has been allowed to stand. The respectable people of the place greatly regretted the whole of these shock-

ing proceedings, which were done evidently at the command of the Governor Yü Hsien. The magistrate of Hsinchou who so faithfully carried out these diabolical instructions of his superior is named Li Ch'ung-kuan, and he is said to have been since promoted to be chief magistrate of another prefecture, no doubt as a reward for his services on this occasion.

Letter of Roman Catholic Bishop of Southern Shansi, October, 17th.

Our messengers on their way back again called at Macheng, and one of them was able to see the priests who had made so long and gallant a stand against all their enemies and had come out safely. The siege of the place had been raised, possibly because of the flight of the court from Peking. The priests gladly availed themselves of our messengers to send a letter to their headquarters in Chefoo. A translation of this letter, which was written in French, is here appended. It was written in response to a circular letter given to the messengers to be delivered to any European they might meet. It is as follows:—

“South Shansi,

“Mach'eng, nr. Lunganfu,

“17th October, 1900.

“Gentlemen,—Your letter, dated 27th August reached me only to-day. Your couriers will tell you why it has wandered about so long before finding a European. Excuse my not replying in English; my knowledge of your language is limited to being able to read it.

“The information that I can give you is meagre enough. We have been more than three months deprived of all communication, and only lately have we enjoyed little liberty.

“In the beginning of July, the 7th I think, they pillaged the houses of your mission at Lunganfu and Luchingsien. One day before, the missionaries with their wives and children set out, for Pingyangfu probably. Eight li from here, the country people robbed them, and took away even their most necessary clothes. The rumour of this misfortune having reached us, we sent a man to find them and invite them to come here, but unfortunately they had left. Our courier found them eighty li from here, stripped of everything, and not in a condition to continue their journey. They said that it was also impossible for them to come. Later we heard that the mandarin of Changtzuh sien

had given them clothes and had brought them to Kaopinghsien en route to Honan. That was the last news we have had.

“At present there is still a missionary in the yamen of Tunlinhsien, N.W. of Lunganfu, where he is well treated by the magistrate. Unfortunately I do not know his name (possibly Mr. D. Barrett of C.I.M. from Kiah-ien). There used to be several missionaries at Pingyangfu, but I could not say what has become of them.

“That is all I can say regarding your mission and missionaries. Your house and chapel at Lunganfu have been looted, but not destroyed; those of Luching have been burnt and nothing remains of them.

“As for us, Catholic missionaries, a score in all in Lunganfu and Pingyangfu, all Hollanders, we have all for three months been in the greatest danger of massacre. According to the latest news (13th October), all are safe and sound.

“We have had to sustain the attacks of the Great Sword Sect (Tatao Hui) and the Boxers (Iho Ch'uan), and even of regular troops, who during three months have besieged us. Three times they bombarded us in a small village composed of Christians only, but they were repulsed.

“On the 1st of October, a deputy official (weiyuan), sent by the Viceroy at Taiyuanfu, came to “speak peace,” for from all sides mandarins and people have accused us of rebellion. At present he has gone, leaving us a semblance of peace, so that the Christians have a little liberty. With the exception of seven or eight places, all our Christian villages have been looted or burned. So far as we know there have been at least 2,000 Christians massacred. Most of the remainder have lost everything.

“The Empress and Li Ting Hsiao, Viceroy to the Interior (Treasurer of Shansi?), have published a proclamation the gist of which is an order to protect the missionaries and Christians, but of punishment

of the guilty or retribution there has been nothing so far, but it is much that the massacres have ceased.

"As your courier wishes to set out at once, I have written these few lines in haste. I hope therefore you will excuse my careless writing. I ask you further to have the goodness to give our news to our Catholic missionaries at Chefoo and to the French Consul. I hope also that God will bring your couriers safe and sound to Chefoo in order that you may have some account at least of your missionaries and that he may grant you better news still.

"As for the missionary detained in the yamen at Tienluhsien, I will do my best to get some reliable information about him, and when occasion offers, to help him as I am able.

"In closing, I sign myself,

"Your humble servant,

"FRÈRE ODORIC TIMMER.

O. F. M.

pro-Vicar of South Shansi.

"P.S.—Our bishop, Mgr. Hofman, is in safety with Mgr. Scarella in Honan at Tienchiaching, a small Christian settlement of Liuhsien.

"By a letter of one of our missionaries of Hungtunghsien, we have learned that the Emperor and his successor passed by this town on the 9th of this month going to Hsianfu."

Our messengers finally reached Chefoo safe and sound on the 6th of November, 1900, after a journey of fifty-six days' duration.

R. C. FORSYTH, E.B.M., Chefoo.