

**PUBLICATION: JUST JENNIE: THE
LIFE OF VIRGINIA M. ATKINSON**



JUST JENNIE

The Life Story of
VIRGINIA M. ATKINSON

MARY CULLER WHITE

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JUST JENNIE

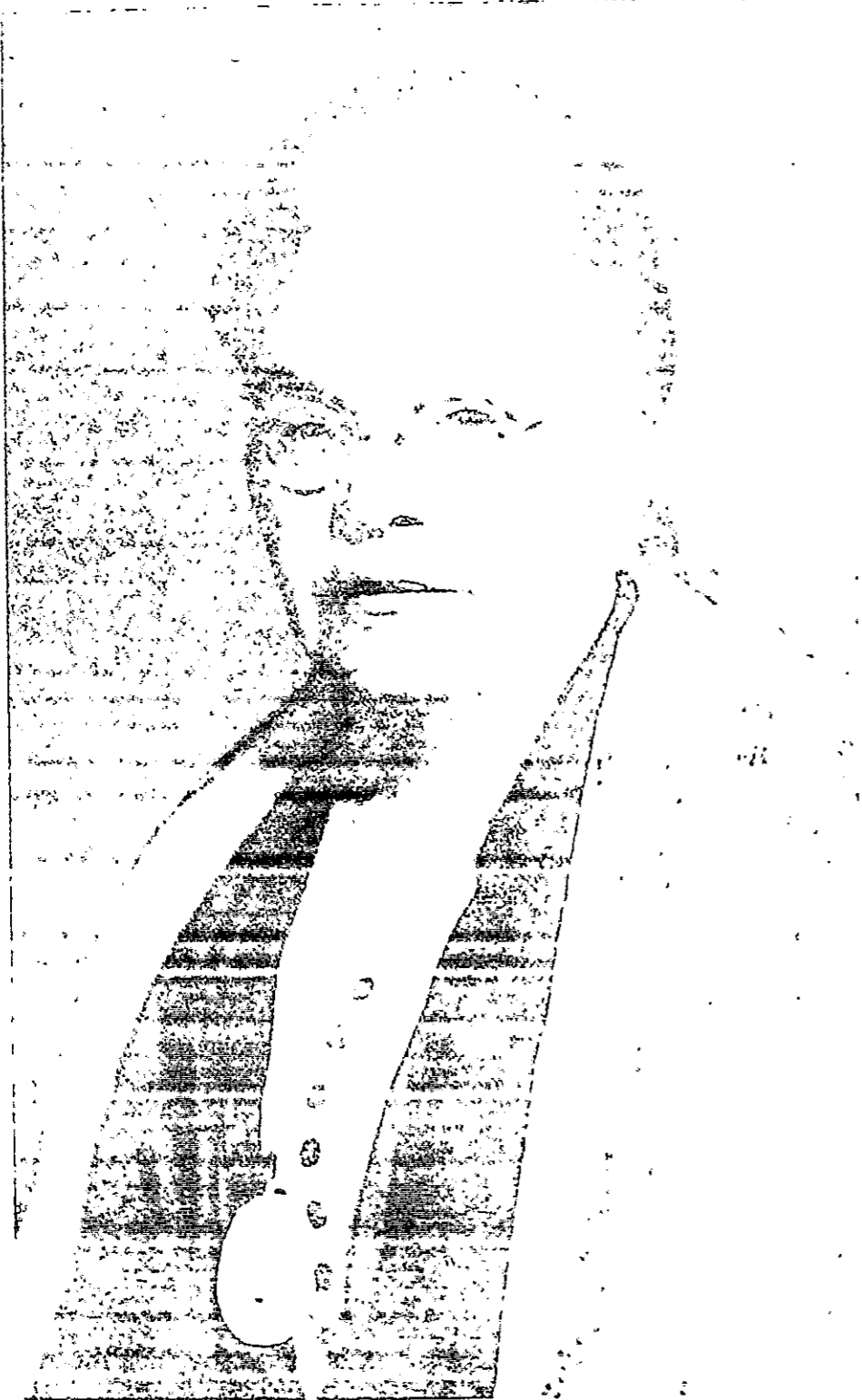
OTHER BOOKS
BY MARY CULLER WHITE

THE DAYS OF JUNE
Life Story of June Nicholson

THE LIFE STORY OF ALICE CULLER COBB

MEET MRS. YU

I WAS THERE WHEN IT HAPPENED IN CHINA



MISS VIRGINIA M. ATKINSON

JUST JENNIE

◊ The Life Story of
◊ Virginia M. Atkinson

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◊ BY MARY CULLER WHITE

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◊ PUBLISHED BY



◊ TUPPER AND LOVE ATLANTA

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A TUPPER & LOVE BOOK

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DEDICATED TO
MRS. ALICE JOHNSON
OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA
ON THE OCCASION OF
HER ONE-HUNDREDDTH BIRTHDAY
OCTOBER 4, 1952
IN APPRECIATION OF
HER LONG AND HELPFUL FRIENDSHIP
toward
JENNIE ATKINSON
AND HER UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION
OF OLD LETTERS AND CHOICE MEMORY STORIES
WHICH ARE EMBODIED IN THIS BIOGRAPHY

. Contents .

Introduction	ix
Foreword	xi
1. JENNIE SEEKS A HOME	1
2. JENNIE BECOMES A MISSIONARY	5
3. BEGINNING THE NEW LIFE IN THE ORIENT	9
4. NEW HOME IN THE "BEAUTIFUL SOO"	16
5. FURLOUGH PHOBIAS	21
6. "ENLARGE THE PLACE OF THY TENT"	23
7. A SHADOW FALLS ON THE MISSION	28
8. THE BOXER INTERLUDE	31
9. FAIR AND FORTYISH	35
10. MONEY THE ACID TEST	40
11. THE DELECTABLE GARDEN	43
12. BETTER THAN ALL THE MOTHERS	49
13. MISS GOLD AND HER CHILD GARDEN	53
14. THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH	58
15. A WOMAN'S SOCIETY FOR THE CHINESE CHURCH	63
16. ALL WORK AND NO PLAY MAKES ANY MISSIONARY DULL	67
17. NO CERTAIN DWELLING PLACE	71
18. HOMESICK AT HOME	76
19. BACK TO CHINA AND WIDER SERVICE	80
20. THE HOUSE THAT LOVE BUILT	83
21. "I SAT WHERE THEY SAT"	87
22. EVACUATION "FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE"	93
23. JENNIE, THE AGED, SEEKS A HOME	96
24. GOODNIGHT, BRAVE JENNIE	99
Appendix	102

. Introduction .

HERE is a fascinating biography written in story form so that it holds the interest of the reader from the first paragraph to the last.

Such a book is especially welcome because far too few biographies of missionary women have appeared during the century in which women have gone to the faraway places of the earth and given their lives in devoted service as teachers, evangelists, doctors, and nurses. Surely the history of missions in our Methodist church would have suffered great loss had not Mary Culler White, author of *Meet Mrs. Yu* and *I Was There When It Happened In China*, brought to life for the present generation the personality and work of Virginia M. Atkinson, pioneer missionary to China.

It was my good fortune to be appointed to China in 1914 to work with Miss Atkinson in Soochow. I had never seen her, but even when I was a child in the juvenile missionary society, she was a real person to me, and every night I prayed that God would bless Miss Jennie Atkinson and China. No young missionary could have asked for a richer experience than that of being introduced to a new country and a new people by Miss Atkinson. She was essentially a homemaker, and immediately I came to know people as her good friends — guests at her table, beloved companions in whom she rejoiced. Wherever she was, one found gaiety, sympathetic understanding, and quick perceptions of the moods and needs of people.

What a privilege it was to go calling on Chinese friends with her; what fun to go shopping on the narrow, crowded streets where her facility with the Chinese language and her ready wit made her a welcome customer. And who can forget her picnics on houseboats that took us to the hills outside Soochow — hills with worn stone steps used for centuries by lovers of nature — hills covered in Spring by azaleas of many hues!

East China was blessed in the early days of the twentieth century in having missionaries like Miss Atkinson, who from the beginning felt that the most important thing was to prepare young Chinese men and women for responsibility in the church and its affiliated institutions. So well did they do their work that, when the revolutionary days of 1927 and later came, there were men and women

Introduction

ready to take over administrative duties even before the government demanded it. So well had the work been done that no revolution or nationalistic excesses could break the bond of warm fellowship between missionaries and Chinese leaders.

Closely associated with Miss Atkinson during many years was Mary Culler White, who now gives us *Just Jennie*. I do not know anyone better fitted to interpret Miss Atkinson and the days in which these two intrepid messengers of the cross worked together in China. Both these women are from the South and are best known in that section, but this book has a wide appeal and should be read by all our women, north, south, east and west. I recommend it especially to those who, in the past, have not known the naturally timid, yet gloriously successful Jennie Atkinson.

Such work as that done by this missionary cannot be lost. There are hundreds of men and women in China today who remember with deep devotion their precious "Miss Gold" who opened the door of a new life to them. And let no one believe that the Christian message is not being preached in China now. Pray that strength and courage may be given to the faithful.

LOUISE ROBINSON
Executive Secretary
Woman's Division of
Christian Service
for China, Malaysia, and Burma
1944-1953

. Foreword .

MISS VIRGINIA ATKINSON was my senior missionary and supervisor when I reached China as a new recruit in 1901. My first assignment was to study the language. There were no language schools at that time, and so difficult did I find my task that, instead of having *one* tutor, as was customary, I had a succession of five regular tutors and sixteen voluntary helpers during my first year. With such a pupil, the teachers *gave* out, but Miss Atkinson *held* out. And, largely through her encouragement and patient assistance, I got hold of the language.

But far more important than this, she taught me how to understand the people — their culture and psychology, their traditions and their customs.

As the years passed and we grew closer together, she told me the story of her tragic childhood and its effect upon her life. I was so deeply impressed by what she had overcome that now, as I write this biography, my first purpose is to show what a timid, handicapped person may become, when fully surrendered to the will of God.

A second purpose is to give to the women of America a picture of the everyday life of one of their missionaries — her duties and diversions, her joys and sorrows — all shown against the background of a changing China whose new life she was helping to build.

A third purpose is that I want the people of America to continue to be interested in China. We must *not* write it off as lost. There are many Chinese Christians who today are bravely carrying on behind the iron curtain, and we must bear them up in our prayers while we work with greater zeal to save the lands not yet enslaved.

My fourth purpose is to do my bit toward counteracting the anti-Christian, anti-missionary propaganda now so prevalent in Red China, by circulating this record of Miss Atkinson's life and work as widely as possible among her refugee friends and acquaintances in Southeast Asia.

My first draft of the manuscript was too long. Even I knew that it contained too much detail, but no doctor operates on his own family, and I felt that I could not do surgery on this brain child of mine. Just as I was feeling tired and a bit discouraged, God sent to me Miss Annie Eloise Bradshaw of Soochow, China and

Foreword

Roanoke, Virginia, who loved both Soochow and Miss Atkinson. Here was a skilled book-surgeon, so she and I had a wonderful time while she wielded the knife, and I held her hand to make sure she did not cut too deep. The result? Here it is. Read it and see!

In addition to Miss Bradshaw, my thanks are due to many people. To Dr. W. B. Nance, formerly President of Soochow University, for reading the manuscript and making helpful suggestions. To a group of former China missionaries who gathered material or gave information:

Miss Mary Minor Farrant, St. Louis, Missouri, and Marlin, Texas

Miss Alice G. Waters, Murray, Kentucky

Miss Clara E. Steger, Mountain Grove, Missouri

Miss Mary A. Hood, now deceased.

Miss Elizabeth Hughes, who passed away suddenly the day after I interviewed her.

To Miss Atkinson's friends and faithful correspondents in Alabama:

Mrs. Alice Johnson, of Birmingham, to whom this book is dedicated. This centenarian, with her bright mind and wonderful memory helped me, as no one else could, but passed away at the age of 102 before I could put the printed book into her hands.

Mrs. W. W. Bonner of Rock Mills, Alabama, Miss Atkinson's old pupil and former playmate.

The Conference officers of the North Alabama Women's Society of Christian Service, who have been unfailing in their assistance and encouragement.

To *World Outlook* for permission to use the story, "Miss Gold and the Garden", which now appears in slightly different form.

Because of the present situation, no names of Chinese are used in this book except those of persons now living in America or else known to be dead. This will explain why a number of Chinese who poured out their love, service and gifts upon Miss Atkinson are not mentioned.

MARY CULLER WHIEL

Oxford, Georgia,
February 25, 1955

. 1 .

Jennie Seeks A Home

HIS FATHER tied the tag on the little eight-year-old girl, kissed her good-bye, and said to her older brother, "Take her to the station, son, buy her ticket, and put her on the train."

It was December 2, 1869, and the girl was being sent away for adoption. The town was Covington, Georgia, and the tag read:

JENNIE M. ATKINSON, Via West Point, Georgia to Rock Mills, Alabama, Care of Mr. Fountain P. Randle
--

The little girl gulped hard, gripped her umbrella, and walked to the waiting buggy. She was accustomed to sorrow, for she had lost her own mother and then a loving step-mother. Now mother number three was coming into the home, and it had been decided that this girl-child must be given away.

Somehow she sensed that her going was not her father's wish. She was convinced that he could not help himself. So, in the midst of her desolation, she was deeply sorry for him.

As she boarded the train little Jennie was full of inward fear. She had been born in the first year of the War Between the States, and the dangers of wartime and the rigors of Reconstruction had left their mark. Now as she sat alone on the train and the winter night fell on the world outside, she wondered if there was something the matter with her that had made her undesirable to her family. If so, would the cousins in Alabama want her? The iron of an inferiority complex now entered her soul, and a tragic sense of insecurity took possession of her whole being.

Nor was her sense of desolation assuaged when the conductor

put her off the train. Her cousin was not there to meet her. The depot agent, however, sent for Mr. Randle, who helped her into the buggy and drove the thirty-five miles to Rock Mills.

Mr. Randle, "Cousin Fount," was the manager of the big textile mill that gave the town its name. He was prosperous, his home was large and comfortable, and his wife, "Cousin Lou," was kind. But Jennie did not find in this home the comfort she needed. The fact was that they had not expected this girl-child, and they did not want her. They wanted one of Jennie's brothers, and they thought they had made their desire plain to the father. Well, thought the Randles, here she is — far too timid to be attractive. But since she has been thrust upon us, through some mistake, we may as well keep her. Part of this Jennie overheard, part she guessed; and the sense of inferiority went deeper into her soul. Schooldays came with good report cards, but at home she was always shy and reserved, always wondering if her cousins would ever want her.

A few years later she read in a local paper that the Rev. W. D. Atkinson, a well-known preacher and temperance lecturer, would speak at West Point, Georgia. It was her father! Jennie went with a party from Rock Mills, and at the close she pressed forward eagerly to greet her father. But others were crowding around him. As he took her hand he asked casually, "Whose little girl are you?" The words fell like a blow, but in the midst of her suffering her loyalty shielded her father from blame. The writer was one of the very few to whom she ever confided this experience.

"How did you feel?" I gasped. But she replied, "I was so sorry for him that there was no room for any other emotion."

She had the good fortune to make one close friend at this trying time. This was her stepcousin, Carrie Vernon, who lived in a neighboring town. The two could be together only in vacations, but Jennie at last had someone, somewhere, to whom she could talk. She called Carrie her "twin cousin," and the two vowed eternal devotion.

More years went by. Cousin Fount was an active layman who had organized a Methodist church in the community schoolhouse. Jennie's father was of another denomination. Both Mr. and Mrs. Randle understood the child's loyalty to her father, and left her free to choose her church. At fourteen she made her decision and joined the Rock Mills branch of her father's church. To her, uniting with the church was no mere outward form. The loving Heavenly Father, who notes the sparrow's fall, had been doing a work of grace in this lonely child, and she had given her heart to

Him. Following that, God had been whispering a message to her about her future service. She was too shy to speak of it at the time, but long afterwards she wrote, "I cannot remember a time when I did not love God and His children both far and near, and want to be a missionary to China."

She needed the strengthening effect of that religious experience, for two severe trials were ahead. Jennie's old feeling of insecurity became more acute when a baby was born to Cousin Lou. This was the longed-for boy, whom they named William Nathan Randle and called "Wilna." Jennie did not mind the extra work, but — would her foster parents want *her* now that they had a child of their own? Her old fears, none the less real because unfounded, rose up to torture her. In October of the same year her father died. She had always loved him devotedly and had rejoiced in his reputation in his own denomination. Now his going made her feel more alone than ever. With her mind she appreciated all that her foster parents were doing for her, but in her heart she still doubted the sincerity of their love. Self-distrust told her she was unworthy, and doubt argued that they were caring for her out of pity. But the people of Rock Mills all thought of her as the loved and loving daughter of the Randle family; and Cousin Fount and Cousin Lou, though never demonstrative, really treated her as their own daughter, and when the time came began to talk of sending her to college.

The Rock Mills school, dignified by the name "Academy," which she had attended from the age of eight, had high academic standards, and Jennie had received a good foundation. Next in line was college, and the girl was delighted that her cousins were willing to send her. Colleges for women were rare, but Cousin Fount was a trustee of La Grange Female College (now La Grange College) at La Grange, Georgia. This was a Methodist institution with a long history of struggle behind it. The main building had been burned in the eighteen-fifties, and the institution had been almost wiped out during the War Between the States, but by the time Jennie was ready for college it had been rehabilitated and was one of the best colleges for women in the South.

In June, 1880, she was graduated from La Grange College with first honor. It was a happy day for the Randle family when they went to commencement to hear timid little Jennie deliver the valedictory.

Jennie was now eighteen, and was elected assistant teacher in the Rock Mills Academy, a two-teacher school. She was to teach elementary subjects as well as the "calisthenics" and "elocution" that she had learned in college. On Sundays she taught in Sunday School

and played the reed organ for Sunday School and Church. While she was in college she had transferred her membership to the Methodist church, realizing that the interests of her home and her college were centered in that denomination, and that it would offer her more fellowship and better opportunities for service than the one she had joined.

Even when established as a teacher she did not think of herself as a "grown young lady." She still wore her hair in long braids, though she was now "Miss Jennie" to all the pupils. She still lived in the Randle home, which was a shelter for the school teachers, the visiting ministers, and several school children from the county who wanted to board in town.

That first year Jennie's roommate was Florence Harper, a vivacious girl only a few years younger than herself. From the first day Florence loved "Miss Jennie" with a wholehearted devotion; and the girl-teacher, still hungry-hearted, returned the affection eagerly. Long afterwards Florence said, "Miss Jennie loved *love*, and when she was with me she got it." In the afternoons the two roamed the hills, or walked beside the rapids that furnished water power for the mill. Led by the younger girl, Jennie developed a deep love for the out-of-doors and belatedly entered into the joy of her lost childhood. Incidentally she also discovered her long-dormant sense of humor. Once when a very sedate minister was visiting the Randles, Jennie and Florence loosened the slats of his bed, listened for the crash, and laughed when it came.

In her later life, Jennie's associates always noted her lightheartedness and her love of fun. They did not know that it was "Little Florence," the pupil-friend, whose love and sympathy had recovered for her diffident teacher this endearing characteristic.

But Jennie had not lost her seriousness of purpose. During all this time of teaching and of learning to play, in her heart she was revolving the deep problem of her life. How could she find a way to go to China as a missionary?

Jennie Becomes A Missionary

"DO YOU SEE that girl over there?" asked Mrs. Ansen West, an officer of the North Alabama Conference Woman's Missionary Society, who was on her way to its fourth annual meeting. Mrs. Alice Johnson, the new delegate who had just boarded the train, looked. What she saw was a pleasant-faced girl of about twenty-two, with clear gray eyes and heavy brown hair that was combed straight back and piled demurely on top of her head. The hairdo seemed to be an attempt to make herself look grown-up, for her smile belied its severity.

Mrs. C. W. Branden, another officer of the group, continued: "It is Jennie Atkinson, on her way to the Conference to dedicate herself as a missionary to China."

Long afterwards — sixty-six years to be exact — Mrs. Johnson, aged ninety-seven, said to the writer: "I fell in love with Jennie Atkinson and with missions at the same time. By contrast with her, there on the train and at the Conference in her committee on children's work, I saw the selfishness of my own life, and I went home a changed woman. I went out to organize missionary societies and to raise money for China. Best of all, through Jennie, Jesus became real to me."

This meeting, which saw Jennie's consecration as a missionary, was in June, 1884. The six years preceding had seen a remarkable development in missions. In 1878, when Jennie was just entering La Grange College, the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was organized with headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee. Miss Lochie Rankin, the first missionary, and a year later her sister Dora, were sent to China. With two women workers in the field, the women of local churches became interested and formed missionary societies. In 1879 the Woman's Missionary Society of the North Alabama Conference was organized, thus binding together their unrelated societies.

At this time and during her four years of teaching at Rock Mills, Jennie was watching the church papers for news of missions and especially of the work in China. It was brought nearer to her by

the fact that her foster mother, Mrs. Randle, was made a conference officer. She longed to offer herself as a candidate, but the old inferiority complex held her back. Early in 1884 came a crisis. Dr. Young J. Allen, missionary in China, sent an appeal to the Woman's Board, calling for nine unmarried women missionaries: "If the church means to do anything for the women of China, we must have these workers. And," he added, "they must be the sort that cannot be spared at home."

More eagerly than ever, Jennie watched the papers. Would the nine volunteer? Yes, here was a doctor, Dr. Mildred Phillips. And here was Miss Laura Haygood, principal of Girls' High School in Atlanta. Certainly, these were women who "could not be spared from home." Two other names appeared, but these made only four. Then the Holy Spirit said to Jennie, "You have been called. Why don't you volunteer?" At last she wrote a timid letter — if a person of her limited ability and experience could be used, she was willing to go. She received the application forms, and later a letter of tentative acceptance from Mrs. McGavock, Executive Secretary of the Board, asking her to appear before the executive committee in Nashville.

"Little Florence," said Jennie one day to her pupil-friend, "I am going to China to be a missionary." She went to Nashville with her hair in pigtails and bangs. She returned after a few days a prospective missionary, but, according to Florence, minus the pigtails and bangs. A missionary must be sedate, Jennie thought, but whether it was her own idea or the suggestion of the executive committee, there is no record. But if Jennie lost her pigtails she gained an insight that was to go with her through life. Mrs. McGavock, the busy secretary, was an invalid, and the executive committee meeting was held in her bedroom. When asked how it was possible for one so frail to carry such heavy responsibilities she replied, pointing to her closet door, "It is in that place of prayer that I obtain all needed strength, courage, and inspiration."

These, then, were the steps that led Jennie to the annual meeting at Athens, Alabama, in 1884, where she made a place for herself not only in the heart of Mrs. Alice Johnson but also in the hearts of the women of North Alabama, a place that was larger, perhaps, because of her timidity. She needed their affection, their support, and their prayers. And they gave her these unstintingly; she was theirs for life, and they were hers.

The summer in Rock Mills passed quickly, and Jennie's preparations were completed. In October she went to Atlanta, where a group was gathered for the journey to China. Mrs. Young J.

Allen and her children, returning; Miss Laura Haygood and Professor W. B. Bonnell and family, going for the first time; these with Jennie made up the party, to be joined by others on the way to San Francisco.

A great farewell meeting was held in Trinity Church, the church in which Miss Haygood had built up an outstanding piece of home mission work. Her brother, Bishop Atticus G. Haygood, and other dignitaries were there. People of all classes and all religious groups, bound to Miss Haygood by educational, social and religious ties, thronged the church and filled the yard, all to hear her say *why*, why she was leaving Atlanta, where she belonged, and going to China.

Jennie Atkinson, listening, felt her heart thrilled. Here, indeed, was a woman whose experience, talents, personality, and spiritual power made her equal to the great task, the task which lay before them both. By contrast, Jennie felt herself wholly inadequate, insignificant. Why — oh, why — she asked herself, is there no training school for green missionary candidates? There was no answer, for Scarritt had not yet been founded by the Methodists of the South. She had not even had the local training available later through the Epworth League and other young people's societies. Except in her schoolroom and in Sunday School at Rock Mills, Jennie was afraid of the sound of her own voice. And she felt herself growing smaller still when, at the party's first stop-over, in Nashville, there was another farewell program in the largest church, featuring even more bishops and Board officers.

In Denver she had a very different experience, but one which added fear to doubt. On the street she met a Chinese man, and her life work, till now in the distant future, seemed to close in upon her. Writing of it afterwards, she said, "I was so frightened that I had to step back and let the others meet him first."

The party, joined along the way by Dr. Mildred Phillips and her sister, Miss Lou, Miss Dona Hamilton, and Dr. O. A. Dukes, finally reached San Francisco and sailed for China October 18, 1884, on the steamship *City of Peking*. Jennie, the untraveled, was glad to be on her way, tormented though she was by fears and phobias. Psychologically, she still had her childhood sense of insecurity, augmented by self-comparison with her great fellow-traveler, Miss Haygood. Physically, she was afraid of everything — strange people, storms, wind, lightning, boats, fire, water — yes, water! And here she was, starting out to cross the Pacific, the world's largest body of water.

It is said of Marshall Ney of Napoleon's army, that on an occasion when his chief sent him on a dangerous mission, he looked down

at his trembling knees and said to them, "If you knew where I was going to take you today, you would shake worse than you are shaking now."

That sentence is a thumbnail sketch of young Jennie Atkins starting out as a missionary to China.

Beginning the New Life in the Orient

YOKOHAMA and beautiful Japan! Mount Fuji rising above the clouds, high in the sky! The day ashore, which happened to be Jennie's twenty-third birthday, was kaleidoscopic in its novel sights and interesting experiences.

On November 17, just thirty days from San Francisco, they reached their destination, Shanghai. The whole Shanghai mission met them at the landing. Handkerchiefs waved, and eyes were wet with joyful tears as overworked missionaries welcomed new recruits. Dr. Young J. Allen was there. Jennie, who had seen his picture, recognized him by his white beard — a beard that had both longitude and latitude. Chinese church leaders were there, and their welcome was so cordial that Jennie promptly lost the fear aroused by the Chinese man on the street in Denver. Miss Anna Muse was there, Miss Haygood's former pupil, who had been on the field two years. Jennie listened with awe to this lady's Chinese as she directed their rickshaw coolies, would she ever learn to make those strange sounds!

The streets were lined with Western-style buildings, but the people seemed to be all Chinese. And such throngs! Some were walking sedately, some were dashing by in rickshaws, some were jogging along with huge burdens swung from their shoulders on carrying poles, some were doing the work of horses as they pulled heavily-laden two-wheeled carts. There was no fear now in Jennie's heart, only compassion. These were the people she had come to help. And they needed help — yes, even hers.

Shanghai was the metropolis of the Orient. Located on the tidal Whangpoo River, which flows into the estuary of the Yangtze where the latter joins the Yellow Sea, it had an excellent harbor, to which came vessels of all nations to exchange the merchandise of the modern world for tea, silk, porcelain, jade, and other Old World treasures.

The city was divided into distinct sections: the "native city," which was the original Shanghai, a walled town ruled by a Chinese magistrate; the International Settlement, and the French Concession,

a section which had come into being when China was forcibly opened to trade with foreign nations, and which was still under foreign rule though populated largely by Chinese; and miles and miles of suburbs which in population and architecture were a mixture of the old and the new. The entire population was around one million, of which about ninety-eight per cent were Chinese.

Winters were cold, summers were hot and humid. Houses were unscreened; there was no sewerage; and malaria, typhoid, cholera, and smallpox abounded. It was a difficult environment, but the new missionaries were ready to make the best of it.

Three of the new arrivals, Misses Haygood, Atkinson, and Hamilton, made their home with Miss Muse at Trinity, a newly built residence for the single ladies of the mission.

One of their first callers was Dr. Allen, who at that time was general manager for the work of the Woman's Board.

"We must give each of you a name," said he.

"Name?" echoed the puzzled women.

"Yes," said Dr. Allen, "Your American names are too foreign. The Chinese cannot pronounce them. You must choose names from the list called 'The Hundred Family Register.'"

To change your name without getting married! Jennie was amused. But the learned visitor continued:

"You, Miss Haygood, can be Miss Hai. 'Hai' means 'sea,' and sounds like the first syllable of your own name. But you, Miss Atkinson, must select a name arbitrarily, as there is no such Chinese name as 'At.' Suppose you take 'Kyung,' the word for 'gold,' which is a good surname here. The surname is always placed first, you know — like Atkinson Jennie. You can be Miss Kyung Tsung-sung, or Miss Gold Arouse-Music."

From that day on Jennie was Miss Gold, a name that was to grow more and more precious to her and to others as the years went by.

Every missionary must make it her first business to acquire the language. There was no language school, so each newcomer was provided with a private tutor — a man in a flowing Chinese robe, big tortoise-shell goggles, and a black skull cap, and his long black hair braided into a queue that reached almost to the ground. Jennie's tutor looked very solemn as he sat across the table from his pupil and began her first lesson by intoning the sounds of the Chinese ideographs (characters) in the first chapter of the Gospel according to St. Matthew. She tried to follow his *tsz*, *dz*, *ss*, *ng*, but she wondered how any American tongue could possibly make such

sounds. As the hours wore on she grew tired and the teacher grew sleepy, but the inevitable pot of tea helped keep the man awake, and Jennie's determination kept her from giving up the struggle.

Language study was her main assignment, Jennie was told. But she was also expected, as soon as her knowledge of the language permitted, to supervise eight mission primary schools, also called day schools. These were all one-teacher schools, none with more than twenty pupils. Jennie was taken on a tour of inspection, and found them housed in dark, unsanitary rooms and taught by untrained teachers who had no idea of regularity in hours or attendance.

Jennie, in her youthful enthusiasm, was for immediate reform, but the mission authorities, with the caution of age, advised her to let the schools alone for the present and to devote her whole time to the language. She obeyed for a while, but the long hours with that poker-faced teacher were too much for her youthful spirits. One afternoon she slipped out and went to visit one of her schools. The boys were studying aloud and each trying to shout louder than his fellows as they memorized their lesson from the Confucian classics. The teacher sat at his table, a pot of tea before him and a stout ruler in his hand. In front of him stood a boy, his back to the teacher, his body swaying from side to side to the rhythm of the words he was reciting. If he stumbled he got a rap with the ruler. There was no attempt at explanation; it was like teaching Plato in the original to first-graders, as memory work. Jennie realized the futility of the method, but she was fascinated by the coordination of sound and movement as the child, chanting at the top of his voice, stepped from foot to foot. It gave her a new light on the language. So Chinese was a matter not of sounds only but also of rhythm. She resolved to practice her own lessons in private with the help of her feet.

At closing time the teacher led the children in a Christian hymn, which they sang lustily, but wrong. Jennie had an inspiration: she would teach these children to sing. She wrote later:

"I procured a black exercise book and wrote out some familiar hymns in Chinese, spelling out the characters by sound. Then I went regularly to my little schools and taught the children to sing. Thus I was the first music teacher in the Southern Methodist mission.

"I was also the first teacher of physical training in the Shanghai schools. It was crude, of course, but young China liked my music and my Georgia calisthenics."

By this time, the children, loving their teacher for the good times

she gave them, began inviting her to go home with them. These visits gave her the pleasure of social contacts and also practice in Chinese conversation.

As the process continued, however, Jennie's hours with the Chinese tutor grew fewer and fewer. That gentleman complained to Miss Haygood: "I humbly beg to inform you, honorable teacher, that young Miss Gold whom you have entrusted to my unworthy care is acquiring the Chinese language, but how she is doing so is a matter beyond my limited comprehension. She absents herself for so many hours that I know she is not getting her knowledge from me."

So Miss Haygood gave Jennie a warning: "Remember, my dear, that your first examination will soon be upon you, and that you must be able to read and translate every character in the New Testament."

Miss Haygood's fears were unfounded. On her examination Jennie read perfectly the hardest passages, even the list of foundation stones for the walls of the New Jerusalem.

This timid, self-deprecating girl had made an all-time high in the annals of first-year missionaries.

Jennie's success with the language gave her more freedom and joy in her work, but in the home she was often unhappy. Her mission associates at Trinity were all older than she and none of them was able to understand her varying moods of frolicsome joy and gloomy introspection. Miss Haygood, head of the home by reason of seniority and outstanding ability, had a brilliant mind and a tender heart. She longed to help every struggling young missionary, but she too was wrestling with the language and suffering from the climate. During her first years on the field she had so many illnesses that she had to be sent away time after time to recuperate. Even when she was at home much of her time was taken up with mission problems, so Jennie did not feel free to go to this busy woman when she was homesick or discouraged. And Miss Haygood not knowing the girl's background, could not understand that this was "just Jennie", still starved for love and appreciation and therefore ready to imagine that she was not wanted in her new home. So baffled did Miss Haygood become by the contrast between the girl's excellent work and unpredictable behavior that she confided to a friend, "I simply do not know what to do with Jennie Atkinson."

Fortunately there is a glimpse of a brighter side to the home picture. Just as Jennie was making herself sick with longing for "twin-Cousin Carrie" and "Little Florence", Miss Elizabeth Hughes came to share the home life of Trinity. In this young missionary

Jennie found companionship and understanding love, and her best side came to the fore.

Sixty-two years later the writer, collecting material for this biography, met this same Bette Hughes, then a retired missionary in Meridian, Mississippi. Although eighty-seven, her mind was clear, her memory good.

"Tell me about Miss Atkinson," I said, "and those early days when you both lived at Trinity."

Miss Hughes' eyes brightened as she responded:

"Even at that time Jennie was succeeding in a wonderful way. She was building a place for herself in the hearts of the people. As I saw it, the Chinese respected the missionaries in general, but they loved Jennie Atkinson. They loved her because she was by nature so self-effacing. Oh, yes, she was young, and her timidity made her unconventional, and people misunderstood her. But as I knew her, in that very situation, I felt that I had never known anyone who showed forth the beauty of Jesus more than she."

Jennie found the climate very trying. She bravely put up with discomforts, but her health suffered. In winter the wind was straight from Siberia, and brought freezing temperatures. Yet, even when the canals were frozen over, there was no heat in her classrooms, and there was "church as usual" on Sunday, when the preacher's breath looked like steam from a teakettle. The Chinese met the cold by putting on any number of thick wadded garments; the missionaries resorted to layers of woolen underwear. Even these precautions did not prevent the sapping of energy by the cold. They even had chilblains (frostbite). Jennie's small pupils had these purplish sores on ears and cheeks as well as on hands and feet. In a February letter of Jennie's to Florence she speaks of being "sick" from the unheated classrooms and the cold rickshaw rides.

The hot humid summers, when malaria, typhoid, dysentery, and cholera abounded, were harder on the health than the winters. An August letter says, "I am troubled by prickly heat, mosquitoes and fleas. We are having the worst heat this summer that I have ever felt. I feel as if I were being boiled. But my day schools are still open and I am going on with the work."

It is characteristic of Miss Atkinson that in these same letters she should say: "Pray for my boys [she was then teaching in the Anglo-Chinese College], twenty-six altogether and not one from a Christian home." And later, "The boys in the Anglo-Chinese Colleges are turning to Christ and are being persecuted. But they are ready for anything! . . . Seven girls from Clopton School joined the church last Sunday."

Illness was a frequent interruption to the mission work, especially among the unacclimated new missionaries. Death was another — young Dora Rankin now lay in a Shanghai cemetery. The fewness of the missionaries was a handicap to expansion, and the very success of their efforts brought overwork. There were more pupils, more schools, more preaching stations, more probationers to be instructed. Jennie wrote in her third year, "I am teaching the girls of Clopton School to play hymns, but I shall have to stop if we do not get help." In the summer of 1887, five new missionaries were sent out by the Woman's Board. Naturally there were high hopes for expansion of the work, but another deterrent soon raised its head; namely, matrimony.

Mrs. McGavock had done her best to keep the single women single. She had booked passage for the five young women, but when she heard that the General Board was sending three eligible young men on the same steamer, she transferred the girls to a later ship. The young men were piqued. Two of them who were assigned to Japan were on the wharf in Kobe when the girls' steamer docked for the day. The third, the Rev. Mr. W. B. Burke, met their ship when it arrived at Shanghai. Result? In three years' time three of the five young women were married to the three young men — still missionaries, but lost to the work of the Woman's Board.

But in spite of these drawbacks the work grew. Jennie's schools were cleaner, better attended, better taught. In one school she noticed three children by the name of Woo, and went to call on their mother. While Mrs. Woo and the older girl were preparing tea and noodles, little Katherine, aged four, plied her teacher with questions. Did all the girls in America have natural (unbound) feet? What games did they play? Were they allowed to study the same books as their brothers?

Jennie became interested in the precocious child and visited the home often. Under her teaching Mrs. Woo accepted Christ and began to attend church. Then, when all of them were ready, the mother and the three children joined the church. Jennie, then teacher, was happy, but even she could not foresee the import of the occasion. She could not know that Mrs. Woo would become a useful Bible Woman, the boy a valuable layman, the older girl a devoted Christian mother whose children would become outstanding Christian leaders — one as an evangelist, another as Bible teacher, the third as an evangelistic singer.

And little Katherine? There was nothing then to indicate that this child had already determined to be a teacher like her dear Miss Gold, and to do something to make Chinese children free and

happy like those in America. The child herself could not know that her new determination would lead her into a kindergarten training school in Japan and from there into the leading universities of America.

The most important event of Miss Atkinson's second year, 1886, was the organization of the China Annual Conference. Along with her work of soul-winning in and through her day schools, she was also interested in the larger work of establishing a church. She knew that in the early days of the mission work a Chinese convert who felt called to preach was still a man of little education and without background of Christian doctrine and practice; he was a good assistant to the missionary but he could not stand alone. Now, however, a number of educated Chinese men were doing good work as preachers and pastors. She was not surprised, therefore, to hear that an Annual Conference was being organized, with provision for the Chinese preachers, when qualified, to be admitted on equal footing with ordained missionaries.

Along with every other missionary, she felt new hope, for the China Conference was an organization through which an indigenous church could grow up and be ready to take the lead in the evangelization of China.

A New Home in the "Beautiful Soo"

Soochow, the Venice of the Orient! Jennie, in her fifth year in China, was going to live there! Mrs. Campbell, agent for the Woman's Board in the Soochow district, had asked for her. This was a tribute to her work in Shanghai, and it added substantially to Jennie's ever-insufficient store of self-confidence.

Soochow, a city of about 500,000, was fifty air miles west of Shanghai. It was eighty miles by canal; and the only means of transportation was by a native houseboat, propelled by three or four boatmen who sculled the little craft from the stern. One August day in 1889 Jennie took all of her possessions, not forgetting a lunch basket, a wash pan, and a roll of bedding, and got on one of these boats, prepared to sit, eat, and sleep for two or three days and nights. The average speed was two miles an hour, but if the wind was favorable and the boatmen put up a sail they could make four or even five miles an hour! If the wind was against them, the boatmen simply tied the boat to the shore and waited.

At last the little craft reached Soochow and entered the city through the tunnel-like water gate that pierced the city wall, turned south on the inner moat, and anchored at the foot of Heaven Gift Street, the site of the buildings of the Methodist mission. It was a quiet arrival, without even the popping of firecrackers to welcome her. But though unnoted it was a significant event. This earnest self-effacing, capable missionary had come to Soochow to stay.

The mission station in which Jennie was to live consisted of a small boarding school for girls, called Mary Lambuth; Bullington Institute for boys; a small church; and two hospitals, one for men, the other for women and children. Jennie's home was to be at 'Eastside,' the residence for unmarried women missionaries next door to the girls' school.

Her new work was the supervision of the Methodist day schools. In this ultra-conservative city it was not easy. Later, under the title, "A Decade of Day Schools in Soochow," she wrote:

A New Home in the "Beautiful Soo"

There was no harder or more discouraging task than the oversight of these schools. There were five of them, with an average enrollment of seventeen, in the city, and one with only ten boys in the country nearby. There was also one school for girls, in which tuition, embroidery lessons, and the noon meal were all free. Even with these inducements, however, the average attendance was only thirteen; Chinese thinking simply did not include education for daughters. Housing also was a major difficulty, as few landlords would rent to the despised "foreigners".

She was happy to be living and working in the interior — "real China" — as she called it. However, those poorly equipped and sparsely attended schools were far below the level that she had worked up to in Shanghai, and she wondered how they could be used to change the hearts of the people of Soochow. She also thought wistfully of what she had missed by not having had courses in real Bible study and missions. But with five years of successful experience in Shanghai behind her she took a firm hold upon herself and said, "I know that I have no assets save my faith in God, my hope for the future, and my love for my calling. But these are enough."

Aside from her work, Jennie was fascinated by the city itself. Its gray, battlemented wall, ten miles around, had been built about the time that Babylon fell. There were six gates which were closed at night to keep out robbers. Small branching canals penetrated to all parts of the city. The graceful arched bridges could compare well with the Rialto or any other bridges of Venice. No wonder, thought Jennie, that the Chinese have a proverb saying:

*Above is Heaven,
Below are Soo and Hang.*

meaning that the two places under heaven most worth seeing are the cities of Soochow and Hangchow.

Lovely woodwork was done in "Beautiful Soo," and Jennie admired it greatly. In the homes she visited she noted also the beautiful mirrorlike varnish used on the furniture, not knowing that therein lurked an enemy. Once she stopped to examine an intricately-carved table in the open front of a furniture shop. The next day her face had swelled beyond recognition, "as if bitten by a thousand fleas," and her hands were red as if burned in a flame. It was varnish poisoning, like poison ivy, only worse. "You can get it," said the doctor, "just by breathing the air near wet varnish, and the stuff takes six weeks to dry." Chinese, who had lived with the varnish from infancy, were immune, and few foreigners were sensitive to it. But Jennie had such frequent and severe cases of

poisoning that she and her doctor wondered how she could continue to live in interior China. But Jennie made her decision. If this was the price she had to pay for living and working in the place of greatest need, she would pay it.

The streets of Soochow averaged only eight feet wide. One main thoroughfare was so narrow that during rain an umbrella held by a pedestrian in the middle of the street caught the water from the eaves on both sides. Rickshaws and other wheeled vehicles were unknown. People walked, went in boats or expensive sedan chairs, or stayed at home. Women and girls stayed at home.

Jennie walked to all of her schools that were located in the city though most of them were two or three miles away. Sometimes she limped. The rough cobblestones were hard on anyone's feet, and Jennie's ill-fitting shoes, the product of Chinese cobblers, were giving her bunions. And, since custom forbade an unmarried woman to walk on the streets alone, the untrammelled Jennie of Rock Mills, Alabama, had to have a chaperone.

Fortunately she had brought with her from Shanghai an amah, Mrs. Zah (Stone), a bright woman of good family who was willing to work in any capacity if thereby she might earn her living and at the same time learn more of the gospel. Gradually the servant became a co-worker. So Jennie and Mrs. Zah walked those streets together — one with bunions, the other with bound feet. Between them the schools were supervised. The Bible was taught. Some pupils believed. And Mrs. Zah, learning mainly by absorption, was rapidly approaching the status of Bible Woman.

Jennie was oppressed by the idolatry and superstition of the city. The Buddhists had their orange-red temples filled with images. The Confucianists, though not idol-worshippers, had their great musty temple where, at the spring and fall equinoxes, animal sacrifices were offered to the spirit of Confucius. The Taoists, whose religion was a kind of animism, had temples to such mythical creatures as the fox ghost, held responsible for all mysterious fires, and the snake king.

One day when she was walking along a very narrow street she met a man who was trying to sell a venomous-looking snake which lay coiled in a basket. "Buy snake!" he called, "buy snake and set it free! Gain merit from the gods by setting snake free!"

She hurried on. She ran, for she was afraid of snakes. Yet she knew that someone would buy that serpent and set it free in the heart of that crowded city. Oh, these people, thought the young missionary, these people whom I have come to help! Bound by superstition, yet calling their bonds religion! How glad I am that

I can teach my pupils about the Ioving Heavenly Father, and about Jesus who came to show us the Father.

More boys were coming to her schools by this time, but it looked as though she would never get hold of the girls. She still had that one little day school for girls, but its few straggling pupils were from the poorest families. She decided to visit in the homes of her better-class boys and ask their parents to let their daughters come to school. Accompanied by Mrs. Zah she went from one well-to-do home to another. But the parents were adamant.

"Why should we educate our daughters?" one father asked. "They are all destined to marry-out. And after they marry they will belong to their husbands' families and worship their ancestors, not ours. We would lose all we had put into them."

Another father said, condescendingly, "We must explain to you, Miss Gold, that the ideas taught in your schools do not fit in with our Chinese culture and customs. For our women, especially, they are very inappropriate."

A mother, trying to be polite, said, "Our girls have bound feet, and so are unable to walk as far as your school. Of course their feet are bound and must remain so, or men from good families would never marry them." And then the father broke in, "Why discuss the matter? All girls are stupid and unfit to receive instruction." Jennie went home with a heavy heart. But she refused to give up, for her faith assured her that some day, somehow, she would get the girls.

The first reward of faith came from an unexpected source. She was talking with her friend and co-worker, Mrs. Zah, who was now a Bible Woman. "Tell me more about your family," she said, "Are there any that I have not heard about?"

The lady became embarrassed. "Yes, there is one," she faltered, "a daughter of fifteen."

Jennie looked her interest, and Mrs. Zah went on: "I have not told you about her because" — her face flushed with shame — "because I let her go out of my family. She is no longer mine." Then the whole story came out. With widowhood and poverty the struggle to keep her children together had been too much. When a good family asked for the girl she had let her go — for the money so desperately needed. "Now," sobbed Mrs. Zah, "I can never get her back."

"But we will," declared Jennie. "I will go to Shanghai. I will see that family and will pay whatever is needed for her release. Yes, it may be hard, but we will pray, and God will work with us. With God, all things are possible."

They set out on the quest, Mrs. Zah doubtful and Miss Atkinson determined. Miss Alice Waters, now a retired missionary, recalls that she went with them on that memorable trip and that they returned a few days later bringing the girl. Jennie's faith had been rewarded. But not even she could know that she had found the Elisha on whom her mantle of service was to fall.

Miss Waters also recalls a conversation overheard on that visit to Shanghai, a conversation which turned on the vagaries of new missionaries. Someone had remarked, "I hear that Jennie Atkinson has turned out very well, after all." And Miss Haygood replied in firm tones, "I know of no better missionary than Jennie Atkinson."

Furlough Phobias

JENNIE'S furlough was long overdue. The Woman's Board granted its missionaries one year in five or six to be spent in the homeland in recuperation, in reunion with family and friends, and in presenting the cause of missions to the church. At this time, however, the needs in China were so pressing that both Miss Atkinson and Miss Haygood stayed overtime.

Most of the missionaries looked forward eagerly to the home-going. Not so Jennie! Of course, she would love to see Cousin Fount, Cousin Lou, and little Wilna — why, that child would be fourteen! And it would be wonderful to meet once more the dear women of the North Alabama Conference. Yes, Jennie wanted to see her friends, but — but — they would expect so much of her. How could she ever measure up? They would expect her to make speeches — in English! If it were Chinese, now! Why, she even thought in Chinese. No, Jennie definitely did not want her furlough.

But she must go. The authorities had so decreed. In May, 1893, she sailed for America.

High praise of Jennie went from Miss Haygood to the secretary of the Board. In a letter written at that time she said: "I hope you will see something of Miss Atkinson while she is at home. It will gladden your heart to see how much she has grown in womanliness and strength of character. She is a devoted worker and very efficient. The day schools in Soochow have been wonderfully built up under her care."

But Jennie knew nothing of the letter. She was already on her way to the dreaded America — afraid of the ocean just then, and still more afraid of what lay beyond.

Judged by her own description, the furlough proved almost as bad as she had feared.

Except for Cousin Fount and Cousin Lou, most of her relatives were strangers to her. She scarcely knew her own brothers and sisters. Moreover, America was a strange new environment. She had had nine years in China, and it was in those years that she had grown up.

The North Alabama women welcomed her with love, but they

invited her to visit their churches and missionary societies and make speeches on China, and that was the thing she dreaded most. She appreciated the way they had believed in her, and had supported her and her work with their gifts and their prayers, but she had never made even one public speech in English, and she felt utterly inadequate for this work. Her old inferiority complex rose up and plagued her. She made the speeches, concealing her misery as well as she could. But when the women crowded around as they always did, telling her that they had "enjoyed her talk" and that she was "wonderful", she was more embarrassed than ever. She could never feel comfortable on a pedestal. If she could have talked it out with these church leaders it would have been better, but she was too scared to tell anyone how scared she was.

There were bright spots, of course. She enjoyed Carrie, now Mrs. N. D. Denson of Opelika, Alabama; and Little Mother, Mrs. Alice Johnson, who was now deep in the work of the Conference Society; and devoted "Little Florence" of Rock Mills. Another bright spot was her visit to her old college at La Grange. She was an honored guest, but she was thankful to find that at Commencement there was no demand for missionary speeches. She also enjoyed attending the annual meeting of the Woman's Board in Atlanta in 1891, for Miss Haygood was there by that time and was the main speaker. With that "statesmanlike woman" present, in her own Atlanta, Jennie was relegated to the background. She wished she could go around with Miss Haygood all the time.

Miss Haygood once asked her aid in acting out a scene from a Chinese school. The older missionary, as the teacher, seated herself at a table, and Jennie, the pupil, recited a singsong Chinese lesson. With her back to the teacher, swaying with the rhythm as she stepped from one foot to the other, she gave a perfect impersonation. And how she did enjoy it! Why couldn't she always forget herself as she had been able to do in that simple little scene?

One day, while visiting her Uncle Nathan Atkinson in West Point, Georgia, she opened the big family Bible. There were the names of her father and of her brothers and sisters. But who was this: "Virginia M. Atkinson?" "Why, it's I," she thought. The name fascinated her. This would be her signature ever after. She would go back to China as Virginia M. Atkinson.

Furlough was over at last, and she could turn her face toward China. Happy in the return and in the company of a new recruit, Miss Clara E. Steger, she sailed from Vancouver in September, 1891. That was the nearest route, and she was in a hurry.

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"Enlarge the Place of Thy Tent"

"How CAN I improve and enlarge my day schools?" That was Jennie's problem when she arrived in China from furlough.

"I must spend more time in the schools. I must not waste precious hours walking back and forth." She decided to buy a rickshaw — an innovation in Soochow. It would be rough riding on the Soochow cobblestones, and she would have to get out at every bridge while her rickshaw coolie bumped the empty vehicle up the rough stone steps and down again. But even so, it would save time.

So the little hand buggy was bought in Shanghai and a man from the country was hired to pull it. He was a clean-limbed, agile young fellow with a pleasant face. He had never pulled a rickshaw, but he proved to be a good runner who liked his job. He had plenty of leisure while his mistress taught her classes, and before long he was listening outside the door for crumbs of knowledge. Soon he was buying books, and presto, Ah-ling, the rickshaw boy, had learned to read.

Miss Atkinson, fond as she was of her boys, was still concerned about the neglected girls of Soochow. Shortly after her return from furlough a Christian woman who lay dying in the Soochow Woman's hospital, fearful about the fate of her baby daughter, thought about Miss Atkinson — so kind to everyone! She would ask her to accept the gift of this girl-child. The result was that Jennie acquired pretty little Bau Kyung-mei to feed, clothe, educate, and love. A faithful Chinese nurse was hired for a few dollars a month, and the child slept in Miss Atkinson's room. Soon Jennie was using her spare moments to cut and sew little Chinese garments. The neighbors looked on in admiration. "Miss Gold is not like a foreigner," they said. "She is like one of us." The results were good in Alabama, too, for on hearing of Jennie's new responsibility the women there raised money for the child's support, and later they were deeply interested in providing for her education.

The day schools improved after Jennie got her rickshaw, but still it was hard to hold the boys in school. As soon as they reached

their fees - their parents would take them out and apprentice them to learn a trade. She decided to add English to the course of study. If they learned English they could get better jobs and their parents would be more willing to let them remain in school longer. The results were just as she had hoped. But Jennie was not satisfied. Her schools were not getting the best that she could give them.

St. Jennie had a vision of herself living in the midst of her work, giving it the whole of herself and her time. Well, why not? Why not rent a house, consolidate her four schools in the western part of the city, and move there to live?

People raised their eyebrows. "You should stay in this mission community," they told her, "where there are American men to protect you. What would you do over there if a riot should break out?" This argument had weight, for there had been anti-foreign riots and more might come. And in time of danger Jennie did like to have the men around. Yes, she was afraid, but this plan had been given her by God and she had to carry it through. So, in effect she said to her wobbly knees, "Come on. We are going to do a pioneer job."

It was not easy. First she must find a Chinese house in the western part of the city, suitably located, and big enough for a large boys' school and missionary residence combined. She sent for the Chinese business agent of the mission, the middle-man, as he was called, and asked him to investigate. After some delays and a little of his the middle-man came to say that he had found "just the place." It was a large hundred-year-old official Chinese residence in the best location - the eminently respectable Long Spring Street.

The house had forty good-sized rooms, built in three sections with courtyards between. In writing of her plans Miss Atkins said: "I can use one section as a missionary residence - with living room, bedrooms, dining room and kitchen. The Chinese family that is to help in the work can live in another section. The third section is reserved for Mrs. Zah and the other Bible Women, who are to come into the work. There is still plenty of room for classrooms and a chapel large enough to seat four or five day scholars. Best of all, the rent is within my budget."

Miss Atkins reported the whole matter to Miss Hildgarde, the executive secretary and treasurer for all of the Women's work. This far-seeing lady gave hearty approval and promised her a certificate and house-ate, a young missionary who had recently arrived.

St. Jennie closed the deal, made some repairs, and moved to the new home in April, 1897. She took with her the new missionary, Mr. Li, the classics teacher, and his family, Mrs. Zah and another

Bible Woman; Ah-ling, the rickshaw coolie whom she would train as a cook; and the little Chinese girl who had been left to her care.

To many the move seemed "an audacious act of sanctified folly," with the principal party "untrammelled by common sense," to quote Hildgarde Hawthorne. Disapproval came speedily from strong-minded missionaries, who are never overly tender with one another. But the sharpest criticism came from an anti-Christian Chinese who wrote in the local newspaper: "An unmarried woman with a Chinese baby has brazenly moved into the heart of this proud and conservative city. There can be but one explanation: the woman is immoral."

Jennie was hurt, but she did not let criticism deter her. It was of this time that she wrote: "We were more than happy that God had helped us to get this house. True, it seemed too large at first. But it not only provided for the large consolidated school, with its classes and daily chapel exercises; it was also used as headquarters for the evangelistic work for women, and on Sundays as a preaching place - the nucleus of a future church. We soon found that the house was not too large."

The move gave a great impetus to the work. The quiet orderly lives of the two American women broke down prejudice. The progress made by the boys in their studies, especially in English, and the good traits of character they developed recommended both the school and the Christian religion. More and more parents relented and allowed their sons to become Christians openly, and before long a regular church with a board of stewards was organized in the school chapel. Jennie's heart overflowed with joy, for she now had what St. Paul called, "The church that is in thy house."

Writing of the events of this period she said: "Living in the old Chinese house we found it easy to make contacts with our students and their homes. One young boy 'whose heart the Lord opened' was anxious to join the church but was hindered for a long time by an older sister, who took authority because the father was dead and the mother a hopeless opium smoker. We could only pray for the sister's heart to be opened, and God answered. One night, the Bible Woman, Mrs. Zah, was called to the boy's home. She found that all the members of the family were in bed with fever, so she stayed with them several days, and cooked as well as nursed. The older sister heard Mrs. Zah's words of comfort to the boy and asked to be told more about the Jesus-doctrine. Mrs. Zah was so surprised she hardly knew what to say. So she prayed. Her prayer was so earnest and to the point that the sister was converted before it was finished. The result was that the mother gave up the opium habit

through prayer, and all the members of the family came to know Christ."

So the work went on, within and without the school. It was so promising that before long another missionary, Miss Susie Williams, was added to the staff. Yet, since her two co-workers had to give most of their time to language study, all the responsibility of the work was still borne by Jennie. Miss Haygood, writing at the time, says: "For the twelve schools in Soochow with nearly three hundred children there is only Miss Atkinson. She is an indefatigable worker, and has a genius for teaching and school management. But she is far from well, and her work is enough to keep two strong women busy."

Some of this responsibility was soon to be lifted, for in Susie Williams God had given Jennie a co-worker after her own heart. Miss Williams had been in mission work with Chinese boys in California and knew how to take hold. Moreover, she was an artist and understood designing and interior decoration. Miss Atkinson had always been a good housekeeper, and had made the old Chinese house look homelike, but under Miss Williams' touch it blossomed into rare artistic beauty. A guest from Shanghai, who had just walked through many unlovely streets, exclaimed as she entered the living room, "This is heaven!"

Now that Miss Atkinson had a home of her own, she encouraged the boys to bring their mothers for a cup of tea. But nearly always the answer was the same: "My mother is too busy. She gets piece-work from the shops and embroiders at home. She cannot afford to stop her work for even an hour." Miss Williams had an idea: "Let your mothers come here and embroider," she told the boys. "We will pay them more per hour than the shops pay, and will give them a pleasant well-lighted place in which to work. And we will sell their work to friends in America."

Thus the Industrial School of Soochow, later to be known as the Moka Garden Embroidery Mission, came into being.

By this time the house on Long Spring Street was so full that it was almost bursting at its ancient seams. The boys' school had grown until it needed all the classrooms of this building. Again it was time for Jennie to "enlarge the place of her tent," and so, to use her own words: "In answer to prayer, a second house on a nearby street was rented as a combination Bible Woman's Home, Industrial School and *girls school*. Miss Atkinson at last had her girls. The school for them was an outgrowth of the Industrial School, for some of the younger girls who came to embroider remained to study. (They formed the nucleus of the future Davidson School, widely

known as one of the finest junior high schools of the Methodist Church.)

With a full heart Jennie was ready to say with Jacob of old: "With my staff I came over this Jordan, and now I am become two *bands*."

A Shadow Falls on the Mission

IT WAS THE turn of the century. In America the Methodists of the South were celebrating by raising a large sum of money for a Christian University for Soochow. But in China a deep shadow was falling on the mission. Miss Laura Haygood was seriously ill.

In the years since 1884 this great leader had directed the Woman's work. She had developed it from a few unrelated charity schools into a compact organization which included not only these elementary schools, greatly improved, but also Bible training schools for women and a high school for girls. This last was something hitherto unknown in China. It was McTyeire School in Shanghai, modeled after Miss Haygood's own school in Atlanta, and soon to become known and honored throughout the nation. The dream which had led Dr. Allen to call Miss Haygood to China had been fulfilled.

Miss Haygood also had the gift, rare even among leaders, of finding and training her successor. On her departure for furlough in 1894 she turned over McTyeire to Miss Helen Richardson. On her return she chose for herself the more difficult task of supervision of the Woman's work. By crude canal boat or lumbering wheelbarrow she traveled to all the stations, near and far, molding policies, aiding the workers and strengthening their Christian faith, teaching the school children to love Jesus.

Now for two years she had been ill with cancer and in great pain. But by alternating between her couch and her desk she was keeping up with the work, writing letters of advice and cheer to both missionaries and Chinese. In the spring of 1899 she felt strong enough for a visit to Soochow and spent a happy week in Jennie Atkinson's home. In a letter to a friend in Atlanta she gave this tribute:

You will remember the opening of this home in the quaint Chinese house two years ago. It would gladden your heart to see how the work has grown. Jennie has borne her responsibility bravely and unselfishly, and is already "coming with rejoicing, bringing her sheaves with her." Through her efforts a church has been organized which already has thirty baptized members and a number of probationers. Even her three Bible

A Shadow Falls on the Mission

Women are fruits of her labors in earlier years. . . . Always looking out for people's best interests, she is allowing her house boy half-day at school, and her cook also time for study. Both were rank heathen when they came into her service; now the cook is a steward in the little church, and the house boy, she thinks, may grow into a primary school teacher.

This was Miss Haygood's last visit to Soochow. Months of greater suffering followed. In answer to pleas from the Board members and from her family she answered: "I am not willing to forsake my post so long as I can render any service whatsoever." Even from her bed her advice was invaluable, her presence a benediction.

In the spring of 1900, realizing that the end was near, she asked the Shanghai missionaries to gather in her room for the Lord's Supper. Just before the communion service, her nurse-amah, who had been won to Christ there in the sickroom, knelt by her bed for baptism and received the sacrament with the missionaries. At the close of the service Miss Haygood gave her testimony, her voice triumphantly clear: "If, when I gave myself to God for life and service in China, I had known that this would be the end, I would have acted just as I did then. It has been worth it all to have been brought to know, love and trust Him as I do now. I am not sorry I came, but glad with all my heart."

The strain of this meeting brought on a time of prostration, but after three weeks came the "good day" for which she had prayed. She asked that the Chinese Christians of Shanghai, as many as possible, gather in her room. About a hundred came, received the Lord's Supper at her bedside, a few at a time, then filled the room and the space adjoining to hear her farewell message: "The greatest privilege of my life has been to witness for Christ in your midst. I hope some day to meet everyone of you in our Father's house. I hope each one will come with a sheaf—father, mother, sister, brother, friend. No one must come empty-handed." They came in turn to her bedside for her goodbye and her personal message. To these friends the sickroom became the anteroom of Heaven.

She died at sunset, April 20, 1900. She was fifty-four years old and had been in China sixteen years.

Of the many tributes, none was more heartfelt than that of Jennie Atkinson:

"Miss Haygood came to China to love, help and save the Chinese, she was also mother and friend to the younger missionaries. I thank God that in the home at Trinity He made a place for me. I was young—I knew it and she knew it. I can never tell how much I owe her. One reason is that I do not know. Many a time I find myself doing things in such and such a way, and the reason if I

could analyze it would be that 'Miss Laura' did it so. I praise God for having given us Miss Haygood, and I beg Him to make us more like her."

Miss Haygood's body was laid to rest in the old cemetery in the French Concession in Shanghai. A spring of water gushed up in the grave as it was being dug. How typical, thought the missionaries, of the rivers of living water that had flowed and were still flowing from her life!

. 8 .

The Boxer Interlude

IT CAME! The thing that Jennie Atkinson dreaded most — war and massacre. Only two months after Miss Haygood's death the Boxer uprising broke out in China.

The Boxers were an old secret order of Chinese zealots who called themselves the "Justice and Peace (or Harmony) Fists," and from this name came the Western term "Boxers". This society revived after the defeat of China by Japan in 1895. The original aim of the order was to rid China of the Manchu Dynasty, especially the Empress Dowager, Tsu-Hsi, who had imprisoned the progressive young emperor and usurped the throne in Peking.

Now another hatred was growing up in China — the hatred of foreign nations. The Boxers, together with more rational Chinese, resented the encroachments that had been made upon their country. Hongkong had been seized by Britain, and opium from India forced upon China, as a result of the "Opium War" of 1839-42. The island of Formosa had been taken by Japan as indemnity after the war of 1894-5. Tsingtao, seaport of Shantung, was held by Germany. Many nations held "concessions" in the most important ports. It was all legal, for the tottering government of China bowed to armed might and signed on the dotted line. But it was not morally right, and the Chinese knew it.

The Empress took advantage of this smoldering hatred. Faced by threatening demands for reform, she shrewdly turned the fury of the Boxers against the aggressor nations, inciting them to kill all Westerners living in China — whether diplomats, business men or missionaries. The most frequent victims were missionaries, who had gone farther into the interior and who taught a religion that opposed ancestor worship and idols. For the same reason many Chinese Christians, along with the missionaries, suffered martyrdom.

To spread the uprising over the whole country, the Empress ordered a telegram sent to the governors of all the provinces: "Exterminate the foreigners."

Fortunately for China as well as for the innocent victims, the four secretaries of Foreign Affairs were real statesmen. They knew that

the course ordered by the Empress would result in war and the eventual dismemberment of China. At the risk of their lives they changed the telegram to read "Protect the foreigners." They were seized and beheaded, and the original telegram was sent out. But the fact of two contradictory orders gave the governors and local officials the chance to use their own judgment. They "protected" or "exterminated" the foreigners according to their own convictions or whims.

In North China, where the power of the throne was greatest, 150 missionaries and many thousands of Chinese Christians lost their lives. News of these massacres, together with the Empress' order, sparked the anti-foreign hatred everywhere. In June, 1900, Soochow, capital of Kiagsu province, was seething with excitement. Would the missionaries be exterminated or protected? The governor let them know that they would be protected if he could control the rabble. He would do his best, but —! The American consul in Shanghai, fearful for the safety of his nationals in Soochow, ordered them all to remain indoors.

An incident of the troubled era is cherished by the missionaries, for it proves that not all "foreigners" were the object of hatred. Dr. W. H. Park, of the men's hospital in Soochow, was greatly loved throughout the city. He received an urgent outcall, and in spite of the order from the consul he set out. At the sight of his curtained sedan chair the cry was raised, "Foreign devil!" The chair was set down in the middle of a mob, all clamoring, "Kill the foreigner!" A rioter drew the curtain and peered in. "It's not a foreigner," he shouted, "It's just Dr. Park." Thereafter Dr. Park went out at will, but there was no such freedom for the other missionaries.

Though there had been no attack on the missionaries or on the Chinese Christians, the situation continued tense. Miss Steger, who was principal of Mary Lambuth, the girls' boarding school on Heaven-Gift Street, received an order from the governor saying: "Close your school and send the girls home quietly." When this had been done the women missionaries, under cover of darkness, set out by houseboat for Shanghai. But Miss Atkinson could not rest even there. She kept thinking, "What next?" She knew that even in Shanghai there might be violence, for the foreign consuls were advising all their nationals to leave the country. Jennie did not want to go on furlough — the last one had been too painful. Neither did she wish to stay in overcrowded Shanghai. She wanted to go to some quiet place, where she could take some of her pupils and go on with her teaching. There was no such place in China, and so she thought of Japan.

Thus it came about that a little party of missionaries and Chinese teachers, students, and proteges sailed for Nagasaki early in July. They were terribly seasick, for they were traveling third class to save money, and the sea was rough. They arrived in a cloudburst, and all their baggage got wet. By the time they had passed the customs examination it was dark. But Dr. Davison of the Methodist mission in Nagasaki was on hand to meet them and to conduct them to the Japanese house that he had rented for them.

They found the house empty except for the myriads of "minor inhabitants" — fleas and mosquitoes. The weary travelers spread out their wet bedding. It was terrible, but at least they were safe from the Boxers!

The missionaries in the party were: Misses Atkinson, Steger, Williams, and Mary M. Tarrant, the latter being a new worker assigned to Shanghai. The Chinese were: Mr. Li, head teacher at the West Soochow school, with his wife and two children; four or five boys from the most advanced class; Miss Atkinson's little protege, now five years old; a tiny boy who had been left to Miss Williams' care; an amah for housework; and Ah-ling, the indispensable handy man and cook. Later they were joined by Mr. and Mrs. R. A. Parker and their children, Miss Lochie Rankin, and other China missionaries.

The next day Dr. Davison provided a table and a few chairs, and Misses Atkinson and Steger, who could speak a little Japanese, went out to buy groceries and to search for boxes to be used as furniture. The only bed in the house was constructed by Mr. Parker. This, known as "the spring bed" was made of wood and rope, and was supported at the corners by four goods boxes. Soon the home was livable, if not comfortable. Long afterwards Miss Tarrant said, "Miss Atkinson's genius for making everyone feel at home never shone brighter than in the crude surrounding of that unfurnished Japanese home."

The sojourn in Japan was an experiment in the carrying on of mission work by group migration. As more students came from China a regular high school was organized. Professor Li taught Chinese classics to the students and to the younger missionaries. Miss Rankin had the "chair" of mathematics. The other ladies taught various subjects, mostly in English. All the students made great strides in English, not only from their class work but because they heard that language every day in the bilingual atmosphere of their refugee home.

Out of that experience in Japan came some notable results. Miss Tarrant, on returning to China, asked to be transferred to the West

Soochow schools, where she remained for forty years of devoted service. Mr. Li, the classics teacher, felt the call to the ministry, joined the conference, and became an effective and well-loved pastor. Sung Pah-foo, one of the students, pushed on in his studies, entered Soochow University in its first year and became its first graduate. Another student entered the Anglo-Chinese college in Shanghai the following year, and in time became principal of Atkinson Academy, the splendid co-educational institution which grew out of Miss Atkinson's school on Long Spring Street. Time fails me to tell of all those from this group who in various ways made their contribution to the cause of Christ in China.

While Miss Atkinson and her co-workers were carrying on their school in Japan, the diplomats and missionaries in Peking, together with many Chinese Christians, had gathered in the Legation quarter for protection. They were besieged by the Boxers for several months, while British, European, and American soldiers marched to their relief from their base in Tientsin. With the victory of this allied army the whole Boxer movement collapsed. But it was December before order was restored and Miss Atkinson and her party could return to Shanghai. In another month the American consul gave permission for them to return to Soochow. To their delight, there had been little violence, no looting, and no one had been killed. Jennie and her colleagues took up their work in West Soochow almost where they left off.

Fair and Fortyish

BIRTHDAYS are important in China; the more advanced the age the more honorable they are. The most polite question that can be asked in China, even of a stranger, is, "What is your exalted age?" And always the birthdays that mark the decades are known as the "big birthdays."

On November 8, 1901, Miss Atkinson had her fortieth birthday and her friends had their opportunity. Those who had been with her in Japan wanted to show their gratitude for what she had done for them, the others their joy in getting her back. And so they united in a great celebration. Fortunately for me, as the writer of this biography, I arrived in China one month before this occasion. It was my initiation into things truly Chinese.

The celebration was held in the boys' school on Long Spring Street, where the walls of the chapel were lavishly decorated with red satin hangings the size of bedsheets, each high-lighted by a huge gilt ideograph meaning longevity. A student presided and made a flowery speech, honoring Miss Atkinson as teacher, church leader, and friend. More honorifics, and then came a puppet show called "Jumping Lions," in which the gaily colored beasts jumped and tore at each other. After the lions came sleight-of-hand stunts, in which the Chinese excel.

The party then went into the big living room for refreshments. There were pyramids of hourglass cakes denoting long life, and big bowls of longevity *mien*—long noodle strips in rich broth. "Do you see these long strings?" asked one of the boys, picking one up with his chopsticks. "You must take them in whole, or you will cut off Miss Atkinson's life." He demonstrated, sucking in a strip at least a foot long. "And you must make plenty of noise, for that will show your appreciation of the feast." Now I understood the meaning of the gurgling sounds that filled the room. Judging by these sounds the food was appreciated, and their beloved teacher would have a long, long life.

As I looked at Miss Atkinson that evening I saw a lady who was fair and fortyish. Her heavy brown hair was turning gray and,

while not exactly fat, she was on the stoutish side — all of which was to the good, for both age and avoirdupois were held in honor. I noticed also that throughout the evening she sat quietly enjoying everything, occasionally murmuring polite protests.

As I learned afterwards, the Chinese do not like impetuous, quick-speaking or over-confident people. Miss Atkinson's natural timidity and self-depreciation fitted their ideas of propriety. A liability had become an asset. As a new missionary I did not know of this Chinese attitude, but I felt that Miss Atkinson was an ideal missionary, and I wanted to be like her.

After that birthday celebration Miss Atkinson often invited me to spend Sunday evening in her home, where an informal English service was held for the older boys. This consisted of a song service in English, testimony and prayer, and a Bible lesson. Miss Atkinson frequently asked me to give this talk, in English, while she interpreted. The good derived was threefold: It gave me something to do besides my language study and thus kept me from feeling lonely and useless, it taught the boys English, and it taught me Chinese.

After the Boxer uprising it became evident that a change had come over the people of China. Fewer children called out "Foreign devil," and more non-Christians attended church. The blood of the martyrs had again become the seed of the church. More and more boys were crowding West Soochow school, and the little church was growing in membership and activity.

A girls' boarding school was now growing up. The small group of girls who had preferred study to embroidery were the nucleus. Now boys were coming with a new request: "We want our sisters to study, but you must take them as boarders, for no nice girl ever walks on the street." Others said shyly, "We want our fiancées to come to school for we want to have Christian homes." A few were admitted, then others were crowded in. Before they knew it the missionaries had a regular girls' boarding school on their hands. The Industrial School also grew. Again the house had become too small.

Later Miss Atkinson wrote: "God helped us find just the right house for our growing schools. I had set my heart on one in the neighboring street, but without faith to believe we would ever get it. Then our business agent called. He had sensed our need and had found us a place. It was the house of my dreams. We rented it and moved our girls and women in."

Next came a change that put this writer into the heart of the West Soochow work. Miss Williams was going to be married — to Dr. A. P. Parker, a widower and leading member of our mission in

Shanghai. I was to take the Industrial School — I, who did not know how to sew on a button! Moreover, I did not want it; I had come to China to do evangelistic work. But Miss Williams told me sweetly that she was sure it was God's will for her to marry Dr. Parker, because I was there to take her place. So she got a husband; and I, a headache.

But all things do work together for good, even unwanted sewing schools. I soon found that the women of the Industrial School knew all that I did not know. And by moving to the home on Long Spring Street, I had the privilege of five years with Miss Atkinson. From her I learned to speak Chinese freely, to know the people and their psychology, to win unbelievers to Christ, to develop leaders for the Chinese Church, to apply faith and prayer to every knotty problem. I became a better missionary for this period of apprenticeship.

Living so close to the people we had many very personal contacts. One evening one of our students rushed in crying, "Save life!" He incoherently explained that his older brother had taken opium to commit suicide. Miss Atkinson picked up mustard, ammonia, and a pot of coffee, called Ah-ling, and motioned to me to follow. The boy led us to his home and into a large room. The neighbors crowded in and everything was in confusion. We finally spotted the patient on a reclining chair, in a deep stupor.

We sent swift-footed Ah-ling for a doctor, two miles away at the mission hospital. Our task, then, was to keep the patient alive until the doctor arrived. Our remedies proved useless. Even the strong ammonia under his nose brought no response. We beat him with wet towels until a student who had followed Miss Atkinson warned us: "Don't beat him any more. If he dies the family will say you killed him." After that we walked him, shook him, called to him, until at last he opened his eyes and spoke a few words. By this time two hours had passed and then, oh joy, the doctor arrived. We took our leave amid profuse thanks from the parents.

Miss Tarrant was waiting up for us, eager to hear. "Just to think," she exclaimed, "that I was washing my hair and did not get to go!"

The man recovered, but we learned to our sorrow that he was an opium addict and a ne'er-do-well.

Preparations for annual conference almost put this episode out of my mind. At this time I was deeply concerned about a very promising girl in the Industrial School — young, beautiful, talented, but with her heart steeled against the gospel. I was praying that I might win her before the end of the conference year. My sedan

chair was waiting to take me to conference, but I felt I must make one more appeal.

"Why is it," I asked her, "that you will not accept Christ?"

"I do not understand the Jesus doctrine," was her reply.

I ignored the evasion. "What is your real reason?" No answer. "Are you betrothed?" Her lovely head went down—I had my answer. "Tell me about your fiance," I said gently, for she was crying now. "Is he a good man or a bad man?"

"Bad," she answered, "very bad."

"Tell me more."

She still twisted her handkerchief. Suddenly she lifted her head. "He is the man whom you and Miss Atkinson saved when he tried to commit suicide."

I was astounded, but the whole picture suddenly became clear. This girl was not opposed to Christianity. She simply could not understand that she could be a Christian while she was engaged to this man.

"I believe that very fact gives us hope," I assured her, "but you, on your part, must stop looking at your trouble and look at Jesus. Give your heart to Him. Trust Him to set you free."

"His family will never consent," she sobbed.

But I pressed my point. "Your friend, Miss V., is a Christian. If she will pray with you tonight, will you pray also?"

She nodded. I ran and got Miss V.'s cooperation, then hurried to my chair. I could go to the conference with a free heart. My year's work was complete.

After conference we approached the problem in the Chinese way, i.e., through the middle man who had negotiated the betrothal.

The man's family said, "No."

Then Miss Atkinson and I did a thing unprecedented in China. We went in person to the father.

"It is unbecoming in us," we began, "to remind you that you owe the life of your eldest son to us, but such is the case. As you know, this son is betrothed to one of our school girls, but he is not a suitable person for any girl to marry. Therefore on the score of what we have done for him, we ask you to accede to the girl's wishes and allow the engagement to be broken."

The old man was taken aback by our directness. He hesitated, then said, "It not our custom in China to break engagements, and besides, we have given valuable presents to the girl's family. She has a financial obligation to marry my son."

"If you will promise," Miss Atkinson responded, "to set the girl free, restoring the eight ideographs of her horoscope, we will send

our representative to arrange the financial details. But we promise you now that the girl and her mother will reimburse you if you will appraise the betrothal gifts on a fair basis. We are waiting now for your consent."

The man yielded. It was indeed true that such a solution was not customary in China. The victory for the girl was a clear answer to her first prayer.

We sent Mrs. Zah to arrange the details. The price named was over a hundred dollars—a very large sum for the simple gifts the girl had received. But she was willing to pay it. She joined the church. Then she and her mother secured piecework from the stores, working from twelve to fifteen hours a day. It was grueling work, but the "freedom money," which they brought and put into our hands grew month by month. At the end of fifteen months Mrs. Zah took the full amount required and exchanged it for the girl's horoscope—the token of her freedom.

Meantime, one of Miss Atkinson's finest Christian boys was asking for the hand of the newly freed girl—but that is another story.

Money the Acid Test

THE CHURCH was always central in Miss Atkinson's thought and work. She felt that no matter how small the membership, a local church should pay the salary of its Chinese pastor. About this time the little church on Long Spring Street had a severe test. It had been self-supporting with a student from Soochow University as preacher. Now it was made a member of a two-church circuit, the other being Palace Avenue, a small church in the center of the city. One of the ablest Chinese pastors, the Rev. T. K. Sze, was assigned to this circuit. His salary, however, as fixed by the mission scale, was thirty-two dollars a month, a sum considerably larger than the two churches together had been paying.

This news was not well received by either board of stewards. They reacted just as more sophisticated stewards sometimes react in America. They folded their hands piously and said: "We cannot raise that much money. Let the Mission Board make up the difference." But Miss Atkinson did not believe in folded hands. She believed in action. She had long been a tither herself, and she felt that the proper way to raise money in any church was to get the members to tithe. Accordingly she set aside a certain week as "Stewardship Week," and asked Miss Tarrant to speak on the subject of tithing every morning at the chapel service of the boys' school, while she and I did the same in the schools for women and girls.

Then she did some figuring. The deficit was only \$7.50 per month — a sum that seems ridiculously small in America, but the standard of living among the people was very low, and the West Soochow church was made up of school boys and girls who were without any regular income. However, Miss Atkinson and her co-workers thought that the boys' school, where some of the students were already tithing, could increase its monthly gift by \$3.00, and the girls and women, who were fewer in number, could increase theirs by \$2.00. That would leave only \$2.50 per month to be added to the budget of Palace Avenue, the older church on our circuit

Money the Acid Test

and one over which we as women missionaries had no supervision.

Miss Atkinson's next move was to ask Pastor Sze how he felt about self-support. Was our circuit able to take this important step? "We must do it," he replied. "I am deeply concerned about it, and I have decided that I will not accept any money from the Mission Board. I will live on what my members pay, whether it be much or little." How splendid, thought Miss Atkinson, but the minister added, "Of course I cannot preach on this subject. Our Chinese code would not allow it. It would be considered begging. But I believe you ladies can push the matter through."

"Very well," replied Miss Atkinson, "you call a church conference and we will present the matter of self-support."

The day came. The representatives of the Palace Avenue Church arrived and then the church members of our two schools. Miss Atkinson introduced the subject, stating the purpose of the meeting and telling of Pastor Sze's resolve not to accept money from the Mission Board. "We are under obligations," she said, "to pay our pastor's salary in full, and we have met here today to decide how to do it." Then she outlined her plan and suggested that each of the three units accept responsibility for a share of the deficit according to the scale that her group had worked out. Suddenly a chill swept over the whole group. Ice was forming, and Jennie concluded her talk somewhat hastily by inviting those present to express their opinions.

There was a painful silence — one minute, two, three, five! With my inexperience and impetuosity it seemed an eternity. Were they going to kill our well-formulated plan? I glanced at Miss Atkinson, but she did not seem at all disturbed. Apparently she was waiting, but for what?

Finally a close-fisted old man, a steward at Palace Avenue church, got to his feet and cleared his throat: "As a congregation we at Palace Avenue church are now raising \$1.80 a month, and I believe that if we all pull together and work hard we can raise this amount to \$5.00. But more than that we cannot do." He sat down — hard.

Listening to him, I too froze up. A whole congregation "by working hard" could add twenty cents a month to its giving! I felt as though I wanted to die. Again I glanced at Miss Atkinson. She was just sitting imperturbable. Why didn't she do something?

No one challenged Mr. Hardfist's statement. But after another long silence our cook, Ah-ling, rose and said, "I am paying sixty cents a month toward the pastor's salary, but I would like to add five cents in the name of my ten-year-old son, who is a pupil in this school."

We all knew that five cents more a month from Ah-ling represented real devotion. Miss Atkinson smiled, and some of the ice began to thaw. Our new classics teacher arose and in the dignified manner that befitted his Confucian training announced: "I am already paying toward the pastor's salary and so is my wife. But I should like to give ten cents a month in the name of my mother, ten cents each for my two nieces, and twenty cents for my little nephew, all of whom make their home with me."

With that statement I felt the ice thawing around my heart. I did not even resent the fact that this man was putting a double value on the boy as compared with the girls and even with his own mother. Our students were beginning to make pledges now, girls as well as boys. The whole atmosphere had changed, all because the people had realized that the idea of apportioning the deficit among the three centers had tacitly been dropped. All over the room people spoke out, pledging what they would give as individuals. Miss Atkinson, Miss Tarrant, and I increased our pledges. Soon the \$7.50 needed was pledged.

How often have I looked back to that day! To me it was a lesson not only in patience, but also in psychology. I saw the value of letting the Chinese do things in their own way. Blessings on you, Virginia Atkinson, for knowing when to sit and wait! From that day forward our circuit was self-supporting. Before many years the churches on our circuit were separated and West Soochow became a station, supporting its own full-time pastor.

. 11 .

The Delectable Garden

THE HANDSOME two-story Chinese house that Miss Atkinson had so joyfully rented for her girls and women proved to be dark and damp. As the number of boarding students increased, its defects became more apparent. The columned rooms and lovely carved woodwork did not compensate for the narrow courtyards. These were just what their Chinese name implied — "sky well," apertures so small that only at noon could sunlight reach the bottom. And there was no place anywhere for a playground.

Colds and tuberculosis, prevalent all around, invaded the schools. Several students became ill with diphtheria. Dr. Margaret Polk, at the mission hospital for women, administered antitoxin, but the available supply of this imported drug was never enough.

A letter from Miss Atkinson written at this time tells of the death of one of her most promising pupils:

"Ai-pau (Love-Precious) was a bright, beautiful girl, betrothed to a fine Christian young man in our boys' school, who had brought her here to study because he was looking forward to having a Christian home. Though her understanding of the Christian faith had not had time to go deep, yet she had accepted Christ and had joined the church. The young man's joy was changed to sorrow when this lovely girl developed tuberculosis, and as the days passed he realized that she could never get well. He tried to comfort her with the gospel message, but finally, unable to bring her peace, he appealed to me. How I did pray that God would give me His own message of comfort and salvation for her.

"She was lying in such helplessness that it was evident that she had not long to live. So I put the question, 'If I should ask you to go to America with me, would you be willing to go?' She joyfully answered, 'Yes.'

"I reminded her of the distance and of the strangeness of the land, the people, and the language. But she still said she would be willing, even happy to go.

"Then I told her that I could not take her to America, but that

she had a Friend who was far better than I, rich in everything she needed, who loved her dearly and wanted to care for her forever; and that He was coming soon to take her to the beautiful home He had prepared for her, where she would be with Him forever. She hesitated a little when I asked her if she would be willing to go with this Friend, but at last she said joyfully that she would go with Jesus to that peaceful home.

"She remained radiantly happy until the end. One day she wakened suddenly, called her fiance's mother and told her that she had seen that heavenly home, and that Jesus was coming soon to take her to it.

"After a few more days of suffering, Love-Precious was called for by the heavenly Messenger. Without fear but rejoicing in spirit she fared forth with her Friend."

In the same letter Miss Atkinson continues: "Opportunities like this make me realize that I have been entrusted with tasks that the angels would be glad to undertake."

Frequent illnesses of the girls, culminating in the death of Love-Precious, made Miss Atkinson realize that she must take steps at once to secure healthful quarters for the boarding school. A rented Chinese house, crowded in among other buildings, would never be adequate. If only she could buy a piece of land and could build her own house with plenty of windows to let in the sunshine!

All unknown to Miss Atkinson, the far-sighted Chinese mission agent had already decided that the West Soochow work was too important to be dependent on rented buildings. One day he called and told Miss Atkinson that the schools for girls and women should have a permanent home and that he knew of a piece of land that could be bought.

The site was desirable, the lot was large, and the price was fair. The mission treasurer, Miss Helen Richardson, answered the appeal, saying that she was so much pleased with the work in West Soochow that she was glad to further it, and that, moreover, she had the money in hand to purchase the lot and also to begin the building.

The new school for girls was built on three sides of a rectangle, with fresh air and sunlight in every classroom and bedroom. The girls moved out of the old rented building, and fumigated their bedding and clothing before they moved into the new. The sulphur fumes worked. Not a case of diphtheria appeared in the new compound.

A fortunate circumstance provided a separate home on the new land for Miss Atkinson and her missionary co-workers. Miss Lochie Rankin's residence, called Louise Home, in a city near Shanghai,

was left vacant when that lady was assigned to work in Huchow, a newly opened station. So the mission decided that this house should be moved to West Soochow. Labor and transportation were cheap, so Louise Home was transferred, as if by magic carpet, to our new compound.

We were happy to have this comfortable, sanitary home, but yet we left the Chinese house on Long Spring Street with some regret. It was so close to the Chinese, so easy of access. It had never closed its doors to anyone in need. My thoughts went back to the day when a student had brought us his little daughter saying: "Keep her for me and save her if you can. My mother, wife and baby died of cholera last night." Miss Atkinson had received the child, ordered her clothes burned, and kept her under observation until the danger of cholera had passed. I wondered whether people would come to us so freely in the more formal foreign-style house on the new compound. Yes, I concluded, they would, for wherever Virginia Atkinson was, there would be a refuge for the poor and lonely. She had been a homeless child herself; she would always make a home that was open to all.

Now that the girls' boarding school had a building of its own it needed a name of its own, and that, too, was ready. A small training school for Bible Women in East Soochow with the name "Davidson Memorial" had been combined with a similar school in another city. Miss Atkinson decided to use this name, and so the West Soochow girls' school became Davidson Memorial School.

While the girls' school of West Soochow was getting into its new home, the Mary Lambuth school for girls was being moved to Shanghai and another type of boarding school for girls was being built in East Soochow, which was to be like McTyeire. That Shanghai school for the daughters of high class families had been an immediate success, with a ministry that was both wide and deep. Miss Haygood, therefore, had envisioned the same kind of school for Soochow. After her death in 1900 her friends in America raised money to build just such a school, to be known as the Laura Haygood Memorial. By an exchange of property with the General Board a tract of land was secured on the Heaven Gift Street just opposite Soochow University, and its first building was erected in 1903. Thus the name of Laura Haygood was perpetuated in brick and in lives.

Our new compound, which housed both Davidson School for girls and the Industrial School for women, also acquired a name. It fronted on the Moka (Delectable) Garden Street, which took its name from the ornate but dilapidated estate just opposite. Without our planning, people began to call our compound by that name.

Thereby, instead of the old Moka Garden of crumbling rocks and stagnant pools, there came into the thinking of the people of Soochow a new Moka Garden, full of life and activity — a garden where something was growing that they did not yet understand.

When our buildings were completed we moved in, though the grounds at that time bore no resemblance to the name, the Delectable Garden. The top layer was brickbats and rubbish, for Soochow had been laid waste during the Taiping Rebellion of 1850-66, and this site had been unused since that time. Miss Atkinson's first step was to have the soil sifted, so as to make flower and vegetable gardens as well as a lawn. The screened-out debris became an ornamental hill, on which she planted a weeping willow in true Chinese style. Around the home and school she set out roses, violets, geraniums, and "heavenly bamboo" (nandina). The soil was rich and Jennie had a green thumb, so everything grew. The Delectable Garden began to blossom.

The girls also grew and blossomed in their new environment. They had a playground with swings, seesaws, and skipping ropes. The loose jackets and slacks of the Chinese girls of that day were well adapted to athletics. Soon they were climbing trees. The new woman was on the way. The school had no rule demanding the unbinding of feet, but the Christian girls with their "heaven-given" or *natural* feet could excel in sports, and so the other girls wanted to unbind their feet. The clothesline was an index of the unbinding process. The bandages of the bound feet, hung out with the other laundry, were at first two or three yards long. As the year progressed those bandages grew shorter and shorter, and then fewer and fewer. The girls were unbinding their feet.

The church on Long Spring Street moved with us to Moka Garden, as it was more fitting for boys than for girls to be on the streets. The boys sat solemnly on one side of the aisle and the girls on the other. I cannot say that there were no furtive glances, for several romances budded right there. Both boys and girls followed the rules of Chinese decorum, but they were beginning to make their own choices.

As the schools grew the congregation grew. Soon our largest classroom became too small, and the members began contributing money for a separate building. Long before this was erected the Chinese had given it the name "Save the World Church," a very beautiful name in Chinese.

In 1905 came a scare-interlude — anti-foreign riots in Shanghai — missionaries in the interior were called to the protection of the International Settlement. Dr. A. P. Parker sent a telegram: "Riots

here. Better come. Consul's advice." We at Moka Garden laughed; who ever heard of running to a riot? Mr. R. D. Smart, youngest member of the Soochow University staff, who had brought the message over, told us that Dr. D. L. Anderson, president of the University, and most of the men at Heaven Gift Street had sent their wives and children to Shanghai and that they had decided that all women missionaries should go. "They say," he reported, "that if an emergency comes they can run better if they are not burdened by you ladies." Miss Atkinson, who was still "just Jennie" in her dread of a mob, agreed that the riots might spread to Soochow. She thought we'd better go. The rest of us compromised: we would all go to Heaven Gift Street to talk the matter over with Miss Pyle and Dr. Margaret Polk.

We found a small group of indignant missionaries. Dr. Polk, a woman's rights stalwart straight from Kentucky, was the hottest of them all. "The idea," she stormed, "of the men of this mission taking it on themselves to decide what we shall do! They have never burdened themselves for me yet. This time I propose to give them a chance. If the crisis comes they'll have to run with me and the one I want to team up with is Dr. Anderson himself."

Dr. Polk with her near two hundred pounds was just about the size of Mrs. Anderson, who had been packed off to Shanghai. Her speech and our laughter eased the tension. We learned also that Dr. Park was on our side; he had said there would be no danger in Soochow, and that he had no intention of sending Mrs. Park and Margarita away. We committed the matter to the Lord and went to bed.

Jennie still needed reassurance, however, as we returned to Moka Garden early the next morning, and she got it from two Chinese mothers who had daughters in our school. They entered just as we were praying for final guidance. "We have heard," they said, "of those anti-foreign riots in Shanghai, and we have come to assure you that there is no danger here. We have no intention of taking our daughters out of school. We hope that all of you will 'rest your hearts'."

That settled it. With quiet hearts we went on with our work, and the trouble in Shanghai died out where it had begun.

About a year after this our schools received a great impetus from an unexpected source. The despotic Empress Dowager was still on the throne in Peking, but she had learned a lesson at the time of the Boxer uprising. She became more favorable toward reform; and in 1906 by a stroke of her vermilion brush-pen, she abolished the old Confucian system of examinations and ordered the planning of

a modern school system, including instruction in sciences, mathematics, geography, history, and even foreign languages. The missionaries had been conducting such schools for decades, and though the fact was never acknowledged, these mission schools became the model for the new system.

Miss Atkinson was gratified by the new turn in education. It was in effect a recognition of the mission schools and their courses of study. It would bring many new pupils into her schools, and most of them would come from families that were able to pay tuition. The old charity school would soon become a thing of the past.

But Virginia Atkinson was looking still further ahead. In one way especially she felt that her schools were not meeting the need. Well-to-do non-Christian families were keeping their daughters at home until they were at least ten years old. There must be inducement to get them in school younger. The school must offer something to the very young that the home could not supply. A kindergarten was the answer — yes, a kindergarten with its games, its songs, its happy social life, might make a strong appeal to the families she wanted to reach.

Where could she get a teacher? So far as she knew there was not a kindergarten in all China, certainly no place where a teacher could be trained. Then she remembered that Miss Margaret Cook of the Southern Methodist mission in Japan had a kindergarten training school. The Japanese language would not be a serious handicap. Why, their textbooks used the Chinese written language. She would choose one of her brightest young teachers and send her to Miss Cook.

The choice fell on Katherine Woo, who as a tiny child in Shanghai had given her heart to God through her teacher "Miss Gold," and had fully decided to use her life to make Chinese children as happy as the children of America whom Miss Gold had told her about. Now Katherine was a graduate of McTyeire and a teacher at Davidson. To the question, "Will you go to Japan for this training?", her answer was, "Yes, indeed."

Katherine Woo, sailing for Japan in August, 1906, became the first student whom Virginia Atkinson sent abroad for training.

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Better Than All the Mothers

Miss ATKINSON must take another furlough. The doctor said so. It was long overdue, for twelve years had elapsed since her first visit to America. Twenty-two years in a foreign land with only one break is a long time.

She did not want to go. She was now deep in her work, and it was hard to let go. And she remembered with a shudder her attempts at speech making during that first unhappy furlough. But she knew that the doctor was right. Moreover, she realized that the speech making might not be so difficult this time. She had so much to tell! She wanted to tell those dear Alabama women and everybody else who would listen the story of the West Soochow work, and of God's marvelous dealings in the schools, the church, and in the hearts of the people.

At annual conference, in October, 1906, the mission delivered the verdict, and gave her a very few weeks in which to prepare.

We of Moka Garden had returned from conference and had as dinner guests several teachers and college students who had been Miss Atkinson's pupils. They had heard the news, and one of them remarked, "Of course we will have a farewell celebration." Miss Tarrant innocently asked, "You mean like the one you had for me when I went on furlough?" The young man artlessly replied, "I think more." This statement was indeed the keynote of all that Miss Atkinson's friends did for her as she prepared to leave.

Other missionaries have had lovely gifts from Chinese friends, but as I looked at Miss Atkinson's array I could but say, "I think more." Others have had crowds to see them off, but what other American woman ever rode in a mandarin's sedan chair with an official red umbrella borne in front, a mounted escort in the rear, and a line of sedan chairs following for the length of a city block?

The news of the impending furlough came as a shock to Miss Atkinson's Soochow friends. She was so deeply rooted among them that they had never thought of her going away. They thought she belonged to China in the same way that they did.

The girls' school received the tidings on the day that I took

charge of Miss Atkinson's classes. The students were going on with the lesson in the normal way until Miss Atkinson entered the room with a visitor. As they were leaving I remarked to the guest that this was my first day as Miss Atkinson's substitute. They had scarcely left the room when a storm of sobs broke out which swept the whole room. Even when the cloudburst had subsided there were intermittent showers all the afternoon.

In the days that followed red eyes were much in evidence. The boys, though more restrained, showed in many ways their love and solicitude. Happily for both boys and girls, they found a vent for their feelings in preparing their personal or group gifts, and in planning for a farewell service and the final send-off. As one of them put it: "She is a helper of the helpless, a comfort to the sorrowing, and strength to the weak. We must plan something worthy of her."

Then the gifts began to pour in — and such gifts! Some were costly, some were simple, some were family heirlooms. All were tokens of love and appreciation. There were embroidered shoes, a long string of amber beads, silver spoons, gold rings and brooches, scrolls and ornaments. Most of these were not from the rich, but from her own boys and girls, who felt that they "owed unto her their very life."

In the Chinese manner, many of the gifts were embellished with appropriate sentiments in the beautiful Chinese characters. A ring was embossed with the characters, "God be with you." A brooch from the Epworth League was made up of the characters forming their motto, "All for Christ." A silver belt buckle attached to an embroidered belt had been cleverly copied from an American model, but it was engraved not with a monogram but with the Biblical inscription, "The Girdle of Truth and the Breastplate of Righteousness." Among the scrolls, to be used as wall hangings, was one which bore, in the beautiful Chinese calligraphy, an original poem which expressed the desire of all Miss Atkinson's friends: "Shepherd, come back to your flock."

A wee bronze idol from an earnest Christian girl was presented with this note: "Take this to America. There will be one less idol and one more Christian in China." In the same package was another image with a letter from this girl's Christian grandmother, saying, "Take this idol with you and tell my sisters in America that it has cheated me out of half my life."

Another priceless gift was a gold pendant in the shape of a cross, on which in relief was the cross-shaped character for *love*. It was from a girl who had previously not become a Christian, but a letter

with this gift told her beloved teacher, who had taught her the story of Christ's "love on the cross," that with this gift she was also giving her heart to Christ.

Day after day the gifts poured in. They were climaxed by the one from the boys' school. To my mind it perfectly expressed the sentiment of all the students. It was a rectangular motto board, about two by six feet, enameled in many colors. Emblazoned in gold were the four Chinese characters meaning "Better than all the mothers." The student body marched over with pomp and ceremony to present it. We of the girls' school stood at attention while the boys fastened the board over our front door with bronze brackets and draped it with red silk. We were the audience while one of them, fully conscious of the honor conferred upon him, made the speech of presentation. We younger missionaries were jubilant. Miss Atkinson was almost overcome.

As I looked at the handsome board and listened to the boy's words, I realized what Virginia Atkinson had meant to her students. These Chinese young people had been taught filial piety from babyhood. They honored their own mothers as do no other people on earth. Yet in this teacher, who was also friend and spiritual counselor, they had found one who could understand and satisfy their inner longings as their own mothers, limited by convention to the four walls of the home, could never do. She was indeed their Mother.

After the tears, the gift-bringing, and the honorifics, came the two farewell services, which were, very fittingly, of a religious nature.

On Sunday evening the boys took their places early, and then the girls marched in. They made a pretty picture, eighty of them, in uniforms of light blue cotton, which as a surprise to Miss Atkinson they had made with their own hands and at their own expense. This service was led by Miss Atkinson herself. She wanted the opportunity to thank them all for the love so beautifully expressed, and to give her farewell message. Her earnest plea was that the love wherewith she was loved might be given first of all to Christ, else it were a vain love and her labors also had been in vain. In response to this appeal, one after another of the students gave a clear testimony of dedication. A young man who had been offered a magnificent salary in a government school said, "I have given my life to God. I am willing to be poor as a beggar if need be, but I must be true to Him."

At the second service, on the eve of her going, the students were in charge, and in this also the keynote was consecration. "By the grace of God I will be true," they said, and they added the thought,

"But you, dear teacher, must get well and come back, for we shall be impatient until this year of separation is past."

The day of the send-off arrived. Firecrackers were in readiness. The lawn was a labyrinth of sedan chairs. The students of the boys' school, in military-style uniforms, marched in, and the procession began to form. First came forty-five boys in navy-blue suits with brass buttons; next, the red ceremonial umbrella carried high on a standard; then Miss Atkinson in her imposing mandarin sedan chair, followed by an escort of six students mounted on fine-looking horses; and last of all the thirty or more sedan chairs of the women teachers and older girls.

In one of the chairs was a student who was going as far as Japan with her teacher. She was the second applicant for the kindergarten training in Miss Cook's school. Even in the stress of leaving, Miss Atkinson was preparing for the work to be done on her return. Her beloved China must have a properly staffed kindergarten.

From my chair at the end of the line I could see that our procession was creating a sensation as it threaded its way through the narrow streets. It was two miles to the station of the newly opened railway, and the whole route was lined with spectators. Again and again I caught the comments: "Who is it? Some important man?" "It's not a man. It's a woman." "What woman?" "It's a woman teacher, Miss Gold of Moka Garden." "All that honor to a woman! Humph!"

The younger girls who had gone ahead by boat and many other friends were waiting at the station. After our procession joined them there were about three hundred people on the station platform. When the train came in sight the full three hundred sang "God be with you till we meet again." Miss Atkinson boarded the train, accompanied by the special student escort which was to go with her all the way to Shanghai. As the train pulled out the popping of firecrackers covered up any final sobs.

And this was little Jennie! — the Jennie who had been in turn an unwanted child in her home, an unadjusted missionary in Shanghai, a frightened missionary on furlough, and an inconspicuous teacher of charity schools in Soochow. She had never claimed the least worth for herself or the smallest right as her own. As I witnessed this heartfelt demonstration I said to myself, "Verily, the meek shall inherit the earth."

Miss Gold and Her Child Garden

IT WAS A busy furlough. There were visits, and it was a pleasure to make the acquaintance of relatives who had been only names; it was still more gratifying to have a long stay with Carrie, and another with Cousin Lou, who had lived with Wilna since the death of Cousin Fount.

The missionary societies of Alabama welcomed her as their "own Jennie Atkinson." Here and everywhere these societies, larger now and better organized, were interested in her and in China. The speech making was easier, for when one's heart is full to the brim with something to tell, it cannot help but overflow. However, she still wished sometimes that these Americans could understand Chinese; it would have been easier on her and so much more interesting for them!

There were some who tried to dissuade her from going back to China. They said: "You have your part over there. Why not settle down now and live the rest of your life here. There is plenty for you to do in America." But there were others, like Mrs. Alice Johnson and "Little Florence" who understood. Of course she was going back, to greater and greater achievements for God and for the Chinese people. They said, "Come to my house and rest before you start back."

She did need rest. In fact, she needed to get well so that the doctors would agree to her going back. The love and understanding of friends helped, and her health improved steadily. There was no question then but that she would be allowed to go back. But all this time there was little rest for her mind. She was always thinking and planning. Always on her heart were the small children of China. How could she bring them, body and soul, into the sunshine; that is, how could she start that long-dreamed-of kindergarten? She already had two bright young Chinese women studying in the Hiroshima school in Japan. They would be the teachers for her kindergarten, but as yet she had no place for them to begin. Moka Garden, the land she had bought, was completely occupied by the Davidson School for Girls and the Industrial School for Women.

The campus would have to be enlarged if it were to include a kindergarten with its playground.

Miss Atkinson did return to China in 1907, and in the course of the next two years she did get her kindergarten.

This writer was so impressed with the transformation that occurred in the children who attended that kindergarten that at that very time she wrote an account of it in the form of a story for children. The essentials of that story are given below.

A PRIM LITTLE GIRL FINDS FREEDOM

Not many years ago, in the city of Soochow, China, a little girl lived in a big house where everything was very stiff and prim. The furniture was arranged in stiff rows against the walls — a pair of straight chairs with a teapoy between and another pair of chairs with a teapoy between, and so on around the room. There was no nursery with little chairs and tables. There was no front yard nor back yard, only some courtyards, called "sky wells," set stiffly between the rooms of the house like the tables set between the chairs. And these were so walled in that the sun came in for only a short time each day.

Clearly, this was not a house for children to play in. Worst of all, the little girl had no one to play *with* or to talk to. Sometimes she wished she were a poor little girl and were allowed to play on the crowded eight-foot street. To be sure, she was afraid of being knocked down by the bearers of the sedan chairs, but at least there were other children there.

In the largest of the courtyards there was a flower bed. She wished she might dig in the dirt, but the gardener said "No." There were also flowers and some small trees around the sides. The little girl liked to look at these because they were allowed to grow. They were not tied down. But the ones her father and mother liked best were the strange, twisted-looking ones in pots. Their branches were so bent and crooked that you might have thought they belonged to the "crooked man who walked a crooked mile." How strange, she thought, that the gardener had *made* them grow that way. The little cedars and pines were not allowed to grow tall. Their branches were tied with strings and weighted with stones to make them grow into fantastic shapes. Here was a cedar stork, all green and alive, but not growing bigger. And there was a cedar deer. And on the table in the ancestral hall was a flowering cherry, which had been dwarfed until its poor little branches were all knots and angles. In the spring, the pretty blossoms did their best to cover up the grotesque branches, but they could never quite succeed.

The little girl felt sorry for those crooked plants. She imagined that they talked to her and told her how sore and weary they felt, and how tired they were of being tied into unnatural shapes. The deer, she believed, wanted to jump out of his pot and run away and live in the woods. But he couldn't, because he was root-bound. Unless somebody

came and set him and the other trees free they must always stay in their pots and never grow strong and straight and tall.

The little girl also felt a sympathy for the plants, because they were so much like herself. People were always trying to make her beautiful by the same means they had used with the flowers. Her shining black hair was plastered down with gum from the slippery elm, and then plaited into two stiff little pigtails that stuck straight out on either side of her head. And her feet were the worst of all! They were bent and twisted until all the toes except the big one went under the foot, and then tight bandages were fastened around them to make them harden into that ugly shape. It was painful to walk on her poor tortured feet, but she did walk out among the flowers — a poor maimed little maiden standing by a poor maimed little tree.

One day she saw some something she had never even imagined before. The servants had built a little platform on the roof of the house, and one day when the amah — her nurse — was not watching she climbed up. Not far away, over the gray roofs of the neighbors' houses, she saw a small hill with flowers and a willow tree on top, and stone seats under the willow. Some girls, not so very much bigger than she, were climbing the hill and stopping to smell the flowers. One of them actually climbed the willow tree. Then a lovely lady came up the hill. She sat down on one of the stone seats, and the children crowded around close to her, not a bit afraid. She seemed to be telling them a story, for they laughed and clapped their hands.

The little girl could not stay long on the platform, for the amah came up to hang out some clothes, and how she did scold! "Don't you ever come up here again," she said, "or your mother will punish you."

The little girl wished she could know more about the beautiful place where the hill was, and the willow, and the happy children. So once when the gardener was in a very good humor she told him what she had seen.

"Oh, yes," he said, "I know that place. I've been there."

"You've been there?" asked the child. "Did you climb the hill?"

"No, but I helped the gardener there plant some roses and lots of flowers whose names you wouldn't know."

"What else is there besides the hill and the flowers and the willow?"

"Oh, swings and seesaws, and such things."

The little girl was so excited she felt like dancing, but she couldn't on her little stubby feet. "Who lives there?" she asked.

But the gardener would not tell her any more, and she was not allowed to climb to the roof again. She almost forgot there was such a thing as the hill with the willow tree. Her hair was combed back tighter from the small round forehead, and the bandages were drawn tighter over the poor bound feet. It seemed, indeed, as if nobody cared, that nobody even gave a thought to the lonely little girl whose life was as cramped as the cedars in their pots.

But one person did care, and care very much. Her name in Chinese was Miss Gold. She lived in the Delectable Garden, and every day she was very happy as she saw her Chinese girls of Davidson School run and skip and play. She was happy because their minds and bodies were as free as the soft green grass beneath their unbound feet. But she was not completely happy, because she was thinking of the many smaller girls in Soochow who were still bound up in their stiff, stiff homes. "If I only had a bigger garden," said Miss Gold, "I would make a part of it into the 'Child Garden' that I have wanted for so long."

Then she climbed the hill and looked over her garden wall. There she saw the very piece of land she needed. It had no houses on it but what seemed to be a mulberry grove. It was not large enough for her "Child Garden," however; so she looked further and by the side of the grove she saw an open space that was nothing but a pigpen full of Chinese pigs.

"Plenty of fresh air and sunshine for pigs," said Miss Gold, "but none for tiny girls! I wish something besides my name were *gold*. I would buy those two pieces of land, cut down those stunted trees, drive the pigs away, and plant a "Child Garden" full of tiny girls — yes, and boys, too."

Then Miss Gold sighed a big deep sigh, and that sigh must have been a prayer, for it went up to God and then echoed back to earth where some people in Alabama heard it. And these people said, "We must get the money for Miss Gold to buy that pigpen and the mulberry grove." So they began to talk and to work. By and by they had enough to buy both pieces of land.

Then a beautiful garden was planted, and a house was built, full of windows to let the sunshine in. One room had a magic circle painted on the floor, and the chairs were *little* chairs, and the tables were *little* tables. Out in the yard there were swings and sand piles and juggling boards and plenty of soft green grass. The front vestibule was all glass, and was filled with tender pot plants waiting to be put into the ground when the warm springtime came. A sign in Chinese writing was put up over the front gate to tell everybody that this was a CHILD GARDEN. Then the beautiful place was opened for the children to come in.

The father of the little girl in the big house saw the sign and looked in. "Oh," he said, "those children are no bigger than my little girl. How can little girls like that study?" When he mentioned it at home, his little girl begged until he promised to let her go. So the next day the little girl came, leaving all her prim ways and bandages at home. "Look," she cried to her father, "there is the hill with the willow tree." And when she saw Miss Gold she said, "There is the lady who told the story!"

Long before this Miss Gold had found special teachers who knew just how to make a Child Garden grow. They did not call themselves teachers, only friends and playmates. From them the shy little girls and boys learned to play together. School was play and play was school.

People came in crowds to see the strange sight. First they walked

around in the garden, and then they went into the room with the magic circle. Some of them called this room — guess what! There, you've guessed it — a KINDERGARTEN. There they listened while the children sang and recited and skipped and played, and they saw that not a single child was timid or afraid. "What makes them so natural?" the visitors asked. "It must be that the air in this garden is different." And the teacher smiled and said, "We call it atmosphere, and the name of it is LOVE."

The Old Order Changeth

"DOWN WITH THE MANCHUS!"

"China for the Chinese!" "Stand up, brothers, and fight!"

The revolution had come out into the open. It was the revolt for which Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, who was to go down in history as the George Washington of China, had been working for decades. Outlawed by the Manchu rulers, he had lived for years in exile, all the time working through the underground in China.

The Manchus were aliens from beyond the Great Wall, who had conquered China nearly three hundred years before and had ruled ever since as despots. Now the Empress Dowager was dead and a five-year-old child (later the ill-fated Henry Pu-yi of Manchukuo) was on the throne. The time had come to strike for freedom.

The outbreak of the revolution came in the important city of Wuchang, far up the Yangtse river. A Manchu viceroy had executed several revolutionists, whereupon his own army mutinied. The viceroy fled, leaving Wuchang with its government mint and arsenal to the rebels. The leader of the mutiny was General Li Yuan-Hung, who became the able commander-in-chief of the revolutionary forces.

The date of that significant victory was October 10, 1911, and so the "Double Ten Day" has been celebrated ever since as the Independence Day of China.

The Wuchang victory inspired confidence. The arsenal at Shanghai surrendered to seven revolutionary soldiers. Walled cities raised the white flag. A revolutionary army appeared before the city wall of Soochow. If the soldiers in the city, who were under the Dragon flag, should resist, the siege would be long and terrible. Miss Atkinson was uneasy as she went to bed that night. She got up the next morning to find the city a sea of white flags. Citizens as well as soldiers welcomed the revolutionists.

Nanking and the large cities farther north were more strongly defended by government forces. There was heavy fighting, and the fate of the revolution hung in the balance. Business was stagnant. Industries slowed down. The hand-to-mouth poor were in real distress.

Soochow had its special problem. It was the chief center for the weaving of the gorgeous imperial brocades, and for the exquisite embroidery on the robes of the mandarins. Now the hand looms in a thousand humble homes were silent, the embroidery frames empty.

Miss Atkinson, always close to the poor, saw the signs of distress. Moka Garden she felt should make its contribution, and it proved to be a large one. On her advice the Industrial School was enlarged to receive many of the professional embroiderers who were now unemployed. The fingers that had decorated the robes of His Imperial Majesty now embroidered table linen and underwear for people of America who were willing to pay for lovely things. It was a venture of faith, for she had no assured market. But God honored her trust, and orders poured in. The number of embroiderers that could be used was limited only by floor space. The beautiful patterns and the exquisite workmanship made the Industrial School better known in America. Best of all, it gave relief to the suffering and increased the good will of the people of Soochow toward the mission work.

In the meantime the war went on. Nanking fell to the revolutionists. Dr. Sun Yat Sen, traveling by the swiftest steamer from his political refuge in England, arrived in China. He was welcomed as honored leader, and on December 29, 1911, he was proclaimed Provisional President. He took the oath of office in Nanking, and made that city the capital of the new Republic.

It cannot be said that all China was won by Dr. Sun. He was sure of the South only. In the North the Dragon flag still waved, and in Peking the Manchus were still on the throne. The strong man of the North was Yuan Shi-Kai, the commander-in-chief of the government armies. But Yuan could sense the will of the people. Accordingly, he "advised" his masters, the Manchus, to abdicate. In a face-saving gesture, the regent for the child-emperor issued an edict which gave Yuan Shi-Kai full power to "organize a provisional government suited to the new times." Sun Yat-Sen, desiring to unite the whole country, negotiated a peaceful settlement. He unselfishly resigned in favor of Yuan Shi-Kai, who was recognized as the first president. China, nominally at least, was united to become the Chinese republic.

In Soochow the people were jubilant over the success of the revolution. The world's oldest empire had been transformed in less than six months into the world's newest republic. The missionaries joined heartily in the celebrations and in the general rejoicing.

A later chapter will mention some of the unfortunate events that followed in the wake of the revolution. Here a few of the benefits may be noted.

The emancipation of women was begun. Footbinding was made illegal. Missionaries and broad-minded Chinese women had been crusading for years against this barbarous practice, though opposed by conservative mothers who were sure that a daughter with unbound feet would never get a husband. Now the younger generation was enthusiastic for "natural" feet, and they had the law on their side. Gradually but surely the custom of footbinding passed away.

The men also got favorable legislation in the matter of the queue, which had been forced on the Chinese by the Manchus as a badge of servitude. The Republic decreed that queues should go, following the fashion that had been set by young patriots from the beginning of the revolution. This was a blessed decision from the standpoint of wives, who had had the daily task of braiding those long satin-smooth appendages.

One of the greatest benefits of the revolution was the stimulus given to a liberal form of education, putting into effect the changes in curriculum recommended by the Empress Dowager six years before. Athletics and sports also were stressed. Chinese young people would now be educated as citizens of the world. Girls' schools of all grades were opened, and in some places elementary schools became co-educational. Innovations sometimes came too fast. Many parents preferred to have their daughters taught by women missionaries who knew how to preserve a balance between the old customs and the new. As the old order changed, more and more girls came to Davidson School. Virginia Atkinson now began to reap rich harvests from her early sowing. An expert embroiderer who had become an earnest Christian went to the Door of Hope, a faith mission in Shanghai, to teach embroidery; the salary was small, the situation unattractive, but it was a call to Christian work and she accepted. Her younger sister, who had studied at Davidson School, went to Korea to teach embroidery — the first foreign missionary to go out from Davidson School.

The daughter of Mrs. Zah, the girl whose freedom Miss Atkinson, as a young missionary, had bought, became the efficient matron of Davidson School. She was now Mrs. Z. N. Tsiang. After studying in Soochow and Shanghai she had become matron of Virginia School in Huchow. On a visit to her mother she had attracted the attention of a pupil in the boys' school. Seeking the assistance of

Miss Atkinson as "middle man", the young student wrote a letter to that lady in his crude English:

My wife is dead. My mother is dead. My child is small. I must to marry early, and I want a Christian wife. Will you, Honorable Teacher, speak to the Honorable Mrs. Zah to ask her to give me her daughter, Precious-Gem, as wife? I ask you to get me a good answer without delay.

So Precious-Gem married young Mr. Tsiang. After some years she was left a widow. It was very fitting that she should return to Moka Garden as matron, bringing her children with her. Through her unusual executive ability she soon began to lift burdens from Miss Atkinson's shoulders. In her protegee of former years the missionary had found a yoke-fellow who was to give her life service to Davidson School.

Miss Atkinson's kindergarten was now leading her on to greater things. She could not indefinitely send prospective teachers to Japan for training. She needed a training school right there in Soochow, to supply her own need and to send out Christian teachers to found kindergartens all over China. There was room enough for such a school on the new plot of ground. Perhaps the North Alabama Conference would provide her with a building. They had never failed yet. She must also have well-trained teachers. There was Katherine Woo, now working as a kindergarten teacher. If she could only send her to America for further training!

Now let Katherine continue the story in her own words:

"When I was studying in Japan Miss Atkinson twice sent me money from her own pocket. Although she never mentioned repayment, I wanted to make some return. So when I began to teach I returned about one fourth of my salary to her for the school. Without my knowledge Miss Atkinson published the matter in the *Woman's Missionary Advocate*. One day \$2000 in U.S. currency came to me from an American lady, Mrs. T. T. Hillman, who said she wanted to pay me back what I had given the school. I said to Miss Atkinson, "I can't accept it." She answered, "Why not ask Mrs. Hillman to let you use it for study in America?" So that is how in 1910 I came to the United States."

So a kindergarten training school was established at Moka Garden and Miss Kate Hackney, already a teacher of kindergarten education in America, came to be its principal. It was the only school of its kind in all that section of China.

A year later the mission authorities decided to change the Laura Haygood School on Heaven Gift Street into a normal school for the training of teachers for the elementary schools of the Methodist

mission. Miss Atkinson saw that the kindergarten training school should be a very large and important part of the new normal school. It was a sacrifice to let it leave Moka Garden, but for the good of the whole work she willingly gave up all claim on this her youngest and dearest child.

The Industrial School also went on to wider usefulness. In 1912 Miss Frances Burkhead came out as business adviser for all the Woman's work. Living at Moka Garden she was asked to be principal of the Industrial School, which with the expansion that came at the time of the revolution sorely needed a trained business woman. She revitalized the institution, strengthened the educational program and renamed it the Moka Garden Embroidery Mission.

Davidson School continued to grow. The boarding department was full, and other girls, emboldened by the new freedom after the revolution, walked on the streets unattended and came as day pupils. It was fast raising its standard to junior high school grade, which at that time was high standing for a girls' school. Miss Atkinson, whose general responsibilities were growing heavier with the years, looked about for a younger woman to be principal of Davidson. She found just the person she wanted in Miss Louise Robinson of Alabama, who was later to become an executive secretary of the Woman's Division of Christian Service.

Miss Tarrant had already, in 1906, succeeded Miss Atkinson as principal of the boys' school on Long Spring Street.

There is a common saying that the successful missionary is the one who makes herself dispensable. By this standard Virginia Atkinson was a great missionary. She had built up four schools of four different types from humble beginnings to splendid success, and had found and trained her successor in each one.

A Woman's Society for the Chinese Church

THERE WAS one department of the Chinese church that Miss Atkinson felt was not developing as it should. This was the women's societies. The larger churches had so-called missionary societies, but they had no constitution to guide them and no worthwhile goal to challenge and unite them. They simply met once a month, answered the roll call, took up the collection, and settled down comfortably to a program of singing, prayer, and exhortation — just another more or less formal prayer meeting.

To the question, "What are the duties of the president?" a member of long standing answered, "To sing and to pray." Trying to introduce a little parliamentary practice, Mrs. Julia A. Gaither once said to the president, "After the secretary reads the minutes you should ask, 'Are there any corrections?'"

"Thank you, Mrs. Gaither," the president replied.

But at the next meeting she made no change in her procedure. So Mrs. Gaither, patiently and sweetly, reminded her of the omission.

"Thank you, Mrs. Gaither," was the reply.

When this happened the third time, Mrs. Gaither asked, "Will you please tell me why you did not ask if the minutes were correct?"

"Oh," answered the cultured, conservative president, "it would be a terrible breach of etiquette to suggest that there might be a mistake in the minutes. The secretary would lose face!"

These societies had served their day. Now that day was gone. Something must be done, and Miss Atkinson prepared to do it. She talked the matter over with her colleagues at Moka Garden, Misses Tarrant, Rogers and Burkhead. Then she went to Miss Belle H. Bennett, the president of the Woman's Missionary Council, then visiting China.

"Isn't it time," she asked, "for us to have an organized conference missionary society in China? And would you approve of our drafting a tentative constitution?"

"It is high time," answered Miss Bennett. "I hereby appoint you to form a committee and to see the matter through."

So the missionaries of Moka Garden translated the constitution of the Woman's Missionary Council of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, with many adaptations to the needs of the young Chinese church. Notices were sent to all the women's societies, asking them to send delegates to an organization meeting to be held in Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai.

The day came. It was in April, 1917. The delegates and many interested visitors arrived. A temporary chairman and a secretary were elected, and the tentative constitution was read. One of the proposals was that sixty per cent of the receipts of each society be sent to the conference treasurer to be used in some needy field. (The committee had in mind work among the aborigines of southwest China.) The remaining forty per cent was to be used by each society for local work. Other items had been passed without discussion, but this one concerning money was like the dropping of a bomb. The societies had never had a plan for the use of their funds. One had been saving all its receipts to furnish a women's parlor in the new church which might sometime in the future be built. Some others simply laid up their treasure on earth, zealously guarding it against any use whatever.

Now the delegates rose up with one accord, each with her own protest. They could not, would not, send any of their money away. Some even forgot their hoarding and became enthusiastic for use of their funds in local work. Even a missionary delegate opposed sending money away — there was too much need in the local church.

This writer, who was now giving full time to evangelistic work, was present. I was eager for this organization, for I knew the value it would be in the development of the women of the Chinese church. My spirits sank as I listened to the debate. I looked at Miss Atkinson. Again she was waiting, but for what? My heart was hungry for a society with a world vision, and I could not sit still like Miss Atkinson. I got up and argued that the more people sent away, the more they would give at home. But too many prominent Chinese were against me, and Miss Atkinson did not come to my rescue. The meeting closed without a decision. The whole project was about to collapse, for the proposal to send money away had made many delegates shy away from the idea of forming a conference society.

Happily, on the second morning a Chinese delegate came forward with a compromise. She proposed that any local society be allowed to become a member of the conference society by sending at least

ten per cent of its receipts to the conference treasurer. This proposal poured oil on the troubled waters. Any local society could join the larger organization without serious financial loss, while those with greater vision could send away as large a percentage as they wished.

The rest was easy. The amended constitution was adopted, and a slate of competent officers was elected with not a missionary on the list. Advisers we would be, if requested, but not officers. The new organization was to be a hundred per cent Chinese.

The purpose of the organization was stated in elegant Chinese phrases, which the secretary translated into broken English as follows: "First, to search out the destitutions of the world and do the evangelistic work; second, to collect the money to help the evangelistic workers; third, to alter the worse (bad) condition of the community."

And so the conference missionary society of what is now the East China Conference came into being. Who could know that, with the old societies gradually falling into line, and with the new ones imbued with a generous spirit and a world vision, the total amount sent to the conference treasurer during the first year would be more than the amount kept at home? In other words, the division of the funds between local and general work was almost exactly what had been at first proposed. And it was accomplished in the Chinese way!

As the years passed this conference society became a miniature board of missions, with work in the far western province of Yunnan, in the northern region of Manchuria, in the distant continent of Africa, and in its own home mission station in Chitung. Nor did the local activities suffer, for such projects as free schools for poor children, adult literacy, and relief work greatly increased. Best of all, under its direction there came into being a splendidly organized work of local evangelism among the women in every community where there was a woman's society.

The society also built for the future in the organization of the Student Volunteer Association, which had as its purpose to unite the Christian girls and to help them find the will of God for their lives. The association had branches in all of the girls' schools, and held regular summer conferences. Under its influence many young women entered the service of the church as deaconesses or Bible Women.

How fortunate that on that day of crisis, when narrowness threatened to overcome vision, Virginia Atkinson could sit back and wait. She knew the spirit and the resourcefulness of the Chinese, and she

trusted them to find a way out. It was no accident that the resolution that saved the day was brought forward by one of Miss Atkinson's daughters, whom she had trained through the years. It was Precious-Gem, now Mrs. Z. N. Tsiang and a leader of outstanding ability. At that first meeting she was elected treasurer of the conference society, and after eight years in this office she was made president. This office she held for twenty-one years.

Yes, with women like Mrs. Tsiang in the group, Miss Atkinson knew that she could sit back and wait.

All Work and No Play Makes Any Missionary Dull

WAS IT ALL WORK and no play on the mission field? No, not for Miss Atkinson. She remembered those drab days when she was a new missionary in Shanghai, and so she managed to have plenty of recreation not only for herself but also for the young missionaries around her.

One of her diversions was to go shopping on Saturday afternoons. Her home at Moka Garden was within walking distance of City Temple Street, the fascinating ten-foot-wide main street of Soochow. She had cut her shoes now where the bunions protruded, and so was able to walk with greater ease. I was one of the fortunate persons whom she initiated into the gentle art of shopping. I learned how to bow when I entered a shop, how to ask for what I wanted and to inquire the price, when to take an article at the price named and when to haggle.

The curio shops on Long Dragon Street were the most interesting, especially after the revolution. Wealthy and official families had cast off everything pertaining to the Empire and the hated Manchu dynasty, and therefore curio shops were filled to overflowing with such fascinating objects as embroidered squares for mandarin robes, coral buttons, carved ivory and jade, and strings of amber beads. Here haggling was a game on both sides. The shopkeeper never lost, for he had bought for little or nothing, and yet the customer got those rare objects for about one fifth the price first asked.

Sometimes we bought hot chestnuts from a wayside roaster, but I learned not to taste them till we had reached home. Chinese etiquette forbade eating anything on the street.

Miss Atkinson did not herself take part in such games as tennis and basketball, but in the early days at Moka Garden she asked Dick Smart, who was young and obliging, to come over and lay out a tennis court for the younger members of her family. He said that his pay was the joke he got on Miss Atkinson when he told her he had "come over to court."

Entertaining the Chinese guests with American-style meals was another of her pleasures. The Chinese enjoyed the novelty of knives

and forks, and they liked most of our food. The prime favorite was coffee, which they called *kä-fee* tea. We soon learned never to serve them cheese. Students especially welcomed the opportunity to get practice in English conversation. After the meal we had music and games, and many a young student went away determined to have a cheerful Christian home just like Miss Atkinson's.

For an outing she adored picnics, and she usually arranged a houseboat party on the holiday called "Setting up Summer," about May fifth, often inviting out-of-town guests. The destination was usually one of the mountains near Soochow, and one had the choice of ascending it on foot or of being carried in a crude bamboo chair. From the top there was the wide view of nearby hills, plains with the network of gleaming canals, and in the distance "Beautiful Soo," outlined by its old gray wall. To the ordinary beholder, only pagodas, temple roofs, and the clock tower of the University were discernible. But Miss Atkinson was farsighted, and she tantalized the rest of us by pointing out every landmark.

On these outings she always invited a few who for one reason or another were having a hard time. She also frequently invited a young missionary or a new Chinese teacher to go on a houseboat trip to an outstation where there was a school and evangelistic center. For her the visit was routine supervision; for the young people it was a picnic, and always a season of spiritual refreshing.

She also showed her affection for the young folk by the nicknames she invented for them, as when she twisted Lucy Jim Webb's given name into "Juicy Limb."

Miss Atkinson also believed in summer vacations. This was one of the things she had learned from Miss Haygood. About 1899 a beautiful bamboo-covered mountain was developed as a summer resort, and many missionaries found it a welcome refuge from the intense heat of the plain. Inexpensive houses and a small church were built of the native earth reinforced by timbers. The single women of the Methodist mission had such a home built for themselves just below the crest of the Ridge. It never failed to be filled with eager vacationers, young and old, from every mission station. Once a Shanghai business man, sending his servant with a note to one of these ladies, directed him in pidgin English as follows: "You go house b'long plenty missy, no catchee master." The servant came straight to our place, and the joke never quite died out.

Miss Atkinson loved this big rambling house with its wide verandahs, but as time went on she longed for a home of her own, one that she could share freely with her Chinese friends. So she and Miss Hackney together had a house built for themselves, a roomy,

two-storied structure of gray stone quarried from their own land. This they named Alabama Terrace in honor of Miss Atkinson's home state. Many an anemic Chinese teacher or deaconess, spending a few weeks vacation at "Here we Rest," found health, comfort, and a new outlook on life. Those who cared to, shared meals with the missionaries, those who preferred Chinese food were allowed to cook it for themselves.

Sometimes Miss Atkinson took her vacation in other parts of China or Japan. She would make up a party and rent inexpensive quarters for them, all sharing in the rental. By traveling third class and doing co-operative housekeeping they could see new and wonderful places for little more than the price of staying at home. One memorable summer was spent in Peking, when she saw for the first time this old imperial city. At every turn were signs of ancient grandeur. She reveled in the alluring shops, the lotus-filled lakes with their marble bridges, the golden palaces filled with priceless art treasures. There was the great white marble circle of the Most Holy Altar of Heaven, and there the triple-roofed Temple of Heaven, which has been described as "the quietness and confidence of which Isaiah spoke, made visible in blue tile and white marble."

While there she wrote Mrs. Alice Johnson:

"Peking is wonderful. I only regret that I did not come earlier. Today I went all through 'The Forbidden City,' (forbidden when it was the residence of the Manchu emperors) and walked over the marble bridges as freely as did the Empress Dowager in the past. And to think, I did it in a gingham dress!"

But Miss Atkinson's chief interest in the capital was the renewal of fellowship with friends and former students. These she found in positions of responsibility in church, government, and educational work. They received her eagerly, feasted her and her party, and took them to places of interest. Some of them begged her not to rent a house, but to come and stay with them.

Among those who welcomed Miss Atkinson to Peking was Katherine Woo, whom she had sent first to Japan and then to America for kindergarten training. While in the States Miss Woo had taken degrees in education and had married Dr. Timothy Lew, who at the time of Miss Atkinson's visit was Dean of the School of Religion of Yenching University. Writing of these two she said:

"I feel that each of these two young people was fortunate in marrying the other. Dr. Lew has risen in church circles until in all China there is not a more useful man nor a better Christian. Yet he calls me 'Mother' just as Katherine does. They have a model Christian home."

One summer she went to Nikko, one of the beauty spots of beautiful Japan, a place of mountains, rushing streams, lacy waterfalls, shadowy cryptomeria, lacquered temples, and not far from a mountain-girt lake. Here the party had the delightful experience of living in a wing of a Buddhist temple, which had padded floors and sliding partitions in true Japanese style.

To this lovely place Miss Atkinson took a new missionary who was "kicking against the pricks" of mission supervision and restraint. The recalcitrant one returned to China a month later saying, "Miss Atkinson saved my life by taking me with her to Japan."

No Certain Dwelling Place

IT WAS 1917, and Miss Atkinson was fifty-six. Her hair was really gray now, and the Chinese were calling her "The Honorable Elderly Teacher of Teachers." Her four schools were prospering under their new principals. Surely, it was time for Miss Atkinson to rest a little from her labors.

But no! The itinerant evangelistic worker for the women's work of the Soochow district had gone on furlough and had married. There was no one to take her place. Miss Atkinson, as usual, stepped into the breach.

Her friends knew how hard the new work would be for her. She was a "home-body," devoted to her home in Soochow. The new work would demand a different center, and constant travel. Moreover, travel would be partly by houseboat over the intricate system of canals, and partly by wheelbarrow. Also, such itinerating frequently called for Chinese food, which had proved to be injurious to her health. But she replied to all objections: "This work needs me. I will go."

Changshu, a walled city of about 100,000, would be headquarters. Rev. and Mrs. Wesley M. Smith were there as resident missionaries, and there was a church with a Chinese pastor. The woman's work had opened two primary schools and also employed several Bible Women.

The work in Changshu was only a small part of the new task. She also had the supervision of the women's work of the district, which included several struggling little country schools. She had her own houseboat, comfortably furnished, but often the last lap of a journey had to be by wheelbarrow. This vehicle was a clumsy wooden contrivance, having a huge wheel sticking up through the center, and narrow shelf-like seats and dangling foot-rests on either side. To prevent tipping over, the passengers on the two sides had to be of equal weight. Roads were rough and seats were uncushioned. Moreover, the barrow-man, or pusher, never greased his wheel; he depended on the squeak to ward off evil spirits.

A young woman in robust health could have laughed off the dis-

comforts. Miss Atkinson, at fifty-six, found her already high blood pressure getting higher. Summer vacation gave only temporary relief. By winter every one, herself included, knew that there must be a change.

And so, in 1919, came a furlough, her third in thirty-four years. (For the average missionary it would have been the fifth.) She had no such dread as she had felt for the first and second furloughs, for the Methodist Church in America was preparing to celebrate the Centenary of its foreign mission work. An expected result of the celebration would be a great increase in mission giving, and she welcomed the chance to report on the needs of the work in China. Besides, the Board was asking for exhibits from every field. "I will go," she announced, "and I will take a live exhibit — Mrs. Tsiang. She will be 'Exhibit A,' as a representative of our Chinese missionary society and a product of our church schools."

Mrs. Tsiang's expenses were not paid by the Board. Miss Atkinson managed the financial side quietly, perhaps with the help of her faithful Alabama friends. All that we on the field knew was that "the money had been provided."

The two left China early in 1919. Together they attended the great Centenary celebration in June in Columbus, Ohio, which was the first union meeting since the separation in 1844 of the two bodies of Methodism. The climax of the convocation was the great pageant depicting a hundred years of foreign missions — its small beginnings, its marvelous accomplishments. To Miss Atkinson it was her own life work there on the stage. To Mrs. Tsiang it was inspiration for the future. She thought proudly: "We in China are a part of all this. We belong. I never knew the importance of our small missionary societies and of our young conference society before. Now I see that these American women also began in a small way. I am going back to China and . . ."

The celebration in Columbus over, Miss Atkinson and Mrs. Tsiang traveled in the South and attended the annual meetings in several conferences. The two were always given prominent place on the program. At last Miss Atkinson had her wish: her friends were listening to the story of the work in China told in the Chinese language. Mrs. Tsiang, a product of the earlier mission schools, had only a limited use of English. She therefore spoke in her native tongue and Miss Atkinson interpreted, the audience equally interested in the two versions.

Near the close of each address Mrs. Tsiang, still speaking in Chinese, would say something like this: "Now I want to tell you

what your missionary, Miss Atkinson, has meant to me and to China." Then followed a glowing tribute to the woman who had rescued her from bondage and helped her become a free and devoted Christian leader. The interpreter, however, ignored the personal reference, and uttered pleasant nothings — anything to fill up the time.

Mrs. Tsiang was chagrined. But what could she do? The performance was repeated at one meeting after another, for Miss Atkinson could not be persuaded to interpret the words about herself.

Finally the Chinese speaker decided to turn the tables on her interpreter. At the next meeting just before she reached the personal part, she closed her address and made a bow of dismissal to her interpreter. Then she astonished the audience — and Miss Atkinson — by saying in her broken English: "Now I want to say a few words to you in your language." Out came her tribute — not a eulogy but a simple statement of fact, all the more eloquent for the effort that it cost the speaker. While Miss Atkinson squirmed in her chair, the women of the home church glowed with satisfaction as they saw their missionary through Chinese eyes.

Miss Atkinson on her return to China took up the supervision of the district work where she had left off. Changshu was headquarters, and she made here a delightful home for herself and several of her Chinese co-workers. But she was destined soon to leave this nest also. Olive Lipscomb, the acting principal of Davidson School, substituting for Louise Robinson, who was on furlough, was herself to go to America. Miss Robinson was returning, but the Laura Haygood Normal School had asked for her as principal, and Miss Atkinson was too big a woman to object. Yes, Bobby (Miss Robinson) must go to Laura Haygood, and Olive must take her furlough and marry the Rev. Sidney R. Anderson of Shanghai as she was planning to do. And yes, Virginia Atkinson must go back to Soochow and take the principalship of Davidson School.

But Miss Atkinson was soon planning for another successor. Miss Lillian Knobles had just arrived in China and entered the newly-opened language school in Soochow. She should be the future head of Davidson. The following year she was appointed there as a teacher, and the priming for the principalship was begun. However, by this time, Miss Atkinson was beginning to wonder. Was this the best move? Wasn't it time to have a Chinese in the higher position, with the missionary as an assistant? Mrs. Tsiang was almost ready for the post. Miss Atkinson had the solution: the two

should be co-principals, with Mrs. Tsiang in charge of administration and Miss Knobles of education. This happened in 1923, and the plan worked well.

But Miss Atkinson could not as yet return to Changshu.

Davidson had again outgrown its buildings, and the two principals cast envious eyes upon the annex occupied by the Embroidery Mission. They needed that building. As usual, Miss Atkinson had a plan. Inspired by the Centenary movement, people were giving more money to missions than ever before. West Soochow might perhaps get the money for a new building for the Embroidery Mission.

The project grew. A vacant lot, facing a main thoroughfare, was found just around the corner from Moka Garden. It was large enough, not only for the Embroidery Mission but also for a church and its educational work.

The committee presented the matter to the church members, who for eighteen years had been worshipping in the chapel of Davidson School. The congregation was still largely made up of students and teachers — people of small financial ability but with large hearts. Their reply was that they would raise the money to buy the land, if the Centenary movement would build them a church. So, in due time, the "Save-the-World" Church was lodged in its own appropriate building, and the inspiring name was engraved in stone over its entrance.

For the Embroidery Mission, Miss Atkinson approached her friends of the Alabama Conference (southern Alabama and part of Florida). The leaders there responded by putting up an ample building, which they named Dowdell Center, in honor of their beloved Mrs. Elizabeth Caroline Dowdell and her daughter-in-law, Annie.

The boys' school was now too large for the old rented building on Long Spring Street, and it also needed a house of its own. The loyal alumni took up the cause, raised money, and bought a good building site. Then they wrote a letter to Centenary Headquarters saying: "Here is the land. Please give us a building." They got it. It was a building worthy of the one whose name they now gave their school, the name of the one who founded it and had nourished it through its earlier years. It became known far and wide as Atkinson Academy.

Miss Atkinson's arduous labor on the building committee for these three new structures was now finished. At the height of her success she happily resigned it all to others and once more headed for Changshu and journeyings by houseboat and wheelbarrow.

By this time Mrs. Tsiang had decided what to bestow upon her benefactress, something that would show her gratitude and her undying love. It was a grave, next to the one she had prepared for herself, in the Peace-and-Happiness Cemetery, the Christian burying ground in Soochow. To the Chinese mind it was the most appropriate of gifts, and Miss Atkinson knew it. The message it brought her was: "We are claiming you not only in life but also in death. Where we die we want you to die, and there we want you to be buried."

Homesick at Home

IN 1926 Miss Atkinson scored a first. She installed a Chinese as full principal of Davidson School. For three years Mrs. Tsiang, as administrative principal, had worked in close touch with Miss Knobles, who was in charge of the academic work. Now Miss Knobles' furlough was due, and her share of the principalship, Miss Atkinson thought, should be assumed by Mrs. Tsiang. This lady was the first Chinese to become full principal of a school of this grade, or of any boarding school, in the East China Conference. It was a milestone in the history of missions.

Miss Atkinson's fourth furlough was now due — in fact, a year overdue. She had fought it, for the very reason that the Board insisted upon it; namely, she was now sixty-five, the age of retirement. If she should leave China and the Board should refuse to send her back — she could imagine no greater calamity.

But there was the health consideration. To high blood pressure had been added the insidious approach of arthritis. Bronchial attacks were increasing in frequency and severity. These foes were impairing her efficiency, in spite of her grim determination to keep going. The mission doctors held out hopes of great benefit from rest and treatment in America.

Davidson now was well provided for. And perhaps the Board authorities would be kind and would let her return. Yes, she would take her furlough. She was in God's hands, and she believed that He would lead her back to China.

In America her health began to improve, and in March, 1927, she attended the annual meeting of the Woman's Missionary Council in Shreveport, Louisiana. There her address, a review of her forty-three years in China, consisted of the following topics:

First: the change in the status of women from a position of nonentity to acknowledged leadership; they were now coming forward as nurses, doctors, evangelistic workers, principals of schools, lawyers, and business executives.

Second: the development in education from the exclusive study of the Chinese classics to a modern comprehensive curriculum. Moreover, the

Homesick at Home

old system of employing tutors for boys only had given way to co-educational schools.

Third: The new national consciousness, and the consequent demand for freedom from foreign encroachment upon the sovereign rights of China. "The time has come," she said, "when the nations of the West must heed China's cry for freedom before it is too late — if, indeed, it is not already too late."

Fourth: the progress of the Chinese church toward self-government, self-support, and self-propagation. She concluded, "The Orient has its own contribution to make to the Christian religion, which was born in the Orient. Let us give the Orient a chance."

Even this unassuming missionary could not help but know that she had had a big part in all this progress. For this reason she thought the Council officers would surely realize that she was still needed to help in some way. But no, the Council went on with its pre-arranged program. In a formal ceremony Miss Atkinson was retired from active service. In recognition of her years and achievements, they presented her with an engraved parchment testifying to her honored status as Missionary Emeritus. This parchment was the very thing that Miss Atkinson did *not* want. What she wanted was to get back to her work in China.

She was aware of the obstacles in the way. She knew that the rule of compulsory retirement at sixty-five was a good one in general, though she thought the authorities ought to be able to take account of exceptions. She also knew that her health stood in the way. Well, she could do something about that. The climate of the American Southland had cured her bronchitis. Her blood pressure was down. She must work now on the arthritis.

She had heard of cases of arthritis being cured by having one's teeth removed. Her teeth had always been one of her good points. They were still sound, regular, and beautiful. Nevertheless, she would consult the dentists. Several advised against extraction, but at last she found one who "thought it might help." Out came the good teeth, in went the false ones, and Miss Atkinson lived unhappily ever after as far as teeth were concerned. The arthritis was *not* helped, but she did not waste time in vain regrets. In her own mind she had paid the last farthing on the price of her return to China. Let those call her foolish who have never felt the call of the East and with it the call to glorious service there.

The "call of the East" was not only in Miss Atkinson's mind. It was soon to become concrete in a very definite call *from* the East.

The following year, 1928, the Southern Methodist church celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Woman's

Board of Foreign Missions. Miss Lochie Rankin and Miss Virginia Atkinson were summoned to Nashville, Tennessee to take part in an historical pageant; Miss Rankin, as their first missionary, was the star; Miss Atkinson, a close second. The two, homesick for China, often went off between sessions to a quiet place to comfort each other. At the same time, they were thrilled at the sight of what the women of their church had accomplished, and Miss Atkinson's mind went back to the "Daughter Society" across the sea which she had helped to organize. How could she get back to help this young society to grow into something akin to this great body in America? At this very time, plans in China were taking form. Mrs. Tsiang, now president of the China Conference Woman's Missionary Society, had received a letter from the secretary of the Council stating that a representative of the Council would be sent to each mission field to assist in the production of a Jubilee celebration similar to that of the mother church, and asking, "Whom do you want?" Mrs. Tsiang and her executive committee lost no time in drafting their answer: "The one we want is Miss Virginia Atkinson. She knows our language and will need no interpreter. She has attended the celebration in Nashville, and therefore she is the ideal person to lead us in our celebration here."

What could the Council officers do? They had asked the question, and it had been answered in good faith. There was nothing to do but to send Miss Atkinson back.

While Miss Atkinson was in America, stirring events in China had been followed by significant changes in some of the mission work.

It will be remembered that the revolution of 1911-1912 had placed Gen. Yuan Shi-Kai at the head of the so-called "People's Government" (Republic) of China. This unfortunate move had ushered in the era of the warlords, a period of military feudalism. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, after the failure of his negotiations, had established a rival government in Canton, capital of the only province in China that he could control at that time. This was the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) government, under which he and his party hoped to unite all China. Although Dr. Sun died in 1925, his followers felt strong enough in 1926 to begin their active crusade, and the army led by Gen. Chiang Kai-Shek started its northward march. The southern provinces made little resistance, and by June, 1927, the Nationalist government had been established as far north as the Yangtse river. There were communist and direct Russian elements in the party and in the army, but these elements were forcibly

rooted out, and in the fall of 1927 Chiang Kai-Shek was established as president of the new government.

The movement, backed by public sentiment, was strongly nationalistic. A new government decree concerned mission work in general and schools in particular. All schools and colleges, to survive, must register with the government bureau of education. For a school to do so, its head and two thirds of its board must be Chinese.

The Methodist mission was not caught unawares. Its long-established policy of giving responsibility to Chinese as fast as they were able to bear it was simply speeded up. As one missionary put it: "For years we have had committees studying the matter of devolution. Now overnight it has come, and everybody is happy."

Miss Atkinson had been wise enough to prepare Mrs. Tsiang for the new responsibility, and to install her aforesaid as principal of Davidson School. Now all educational institutions took steps to secure able Christian Chinese for the position of principal or president. In the fall of 1927, practically all schools and colleges opened under Chinese leadership.

Miss Atkinson in America heard of this great forward stride and rejoiced. She had always believed in and practiced the missionary motto: They (the Chinese) must increase, but we (the missionaries) must decrease.

Back to China and Wider Service

MISS ATKINSON returned to China in the autumn of 1928. As the authorized representative of the Woman's Missionary Council she traveled the length and breadth of the East China Conference, explaining the significance of the Jubilee and aiding local groups in their celebration. A special feature was a pageant portraying the beginnings and growth of the Woman's work in America and in China. Sometimes in girls' schools sweet-faced Chinese girls acted the part of bearded pioneers like Dr. J. W. Lambuth and Dr. Young J. Allen. But in most centers the new day in China was sufficiently advanced to allow girls and boys to appear together on the stage, and so girls' schools and boys' schools, and also men and women of the local church, celebrated together. The pageant was an education to school and church groups, and to the public, with whom drama was always popular. Best of all, the missionary societies received new inspiration and encouragement.

After her tour of the conference Miss Atkinson resumed her work in Changshu. Both teachers and Bible Women had carried on well in her absence, and schools and evangelistic work were prospering. But they needed her help and they knew it, and so they welcomed her return with enthusiasm.

Soon she was presenting them with a challenge: "Do you think we could entertain the annual meeting of the conference missionary society next spring?" The meetings had always been held in the larger centers, but when the first shock of Miss Atkinson's question had been absorbed her loyal helpers began to take stock. The meager facilities of Changshu were discussed in full. At the spring vacation the two school buildings could be used. All desks could be removed and the classrooms filled with bed-bottoms propped up on stools, and of course each delegate would bring her own roll of bedding. Yes, a hundred could be crowded in. Could the hundred delegates be fed? Yes, they could — crowds do not dismay Chinese cooks.

It would be fine, they reasoned, to be able to show these delegates what they were doing in Changshu. Also, the local church and

woman's society would receive a great stimulus from the presence of these guests, their Christian witness, and their presentation of the work of the whole conference.

As Miss Atkinson had expected, the sturdy staff members gave their verdict: "We can do it."

In April the Conference society, its officers and a hundred delegates, assembled in annual session. Mrs. Tsiang, president, was a good presiding officer. The business went off smoothly and the addresses were inspiring. It was all that the hostesses had hoped for.

Miss Atkinson especially remembered the spirit of joy that pervaded the meeting, and one incident that came as a result.

The body had assembled on the side of the mountain just back of the church for a group photograph. There was plenty of good fellowship as the women grouped themselves on the rock ledges among the spring flowers and had their picture taken. The mountain, dotted with Buddhist shrines and monuments, tea houses and photograph galleries, was a popular resort. A crowd of curious on-lookers had gathered to see what the "Jesus people" were doing. Among them was a woman, deranged in mind and hungry in heart. She, attended by her sister, was lodging in a nearby Buddhist nunnery, where they were paying a large sum to the nuns for their prayers on her behalf.

"Look at those Jesus-church people," said the well sister. "They look happy, don't they?"

"Yes," replied the sick sister, listlessly.

"Say, sister," continued the well one, "those Buddhist prayers are not doing you any good. Why not try this Jesus church?"

The sick one looked again. "They do look happy." She looked a long time. "Well, I'll try it."

The next morning the pastor of the Changshu Methodist church received a letter from Mr. Wong, the husband of the afflicted woman. "My wife," he wrote, "has become deranged through the influence of an evil spirit that haunts our home. We have made a shrine for this demon and have worshipped it faithfully with candles and incense. As this worship did not avail, my wife sought the prayers of Buddhist nuns."

He went on to tell how she had noticed the happy faces of the Jesus-church people and wished to give their religion a trial. He himself believed that the evil spirit must first be cast out, and he asked the pastor to come to his humble home and exorcise the demon.

The Chinese pastor and the missionary, Mr. Smith, went to the home. After full investigation they put the questions: "Are you

willing to give up your belief in the demon and in your idols? Are you willing to destroy all your idolatrous objects, including this shrine, and to accept the Heavenly Father as the one true God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, as Savior? If so, we will come with a party of Christians and will pray that God will cleanse your home and heal your wife. We cannot do this in our own power, but God can do it if you will have faith. Are you ready?"

The decision took some minutes, but the answer finally came. "I am ready."

Miss Atkinson went with the group from the church, and took part in the service in the Wong home that afternoon. All pagan symbols were burned, hymns were sung, and earnest prayer was offered for cleansing of the home and for healing of the wife. Mrs. Wong, standing by, was quiet and relaxed. But the husband knew that more was needed, so he asked, "Will these ladies take my wife to live with them for a few days?"

What a request! The hostesses had a hundred guests on their hands. How could they take in another, one who might again lose her reason and begin to rave?

But no such thoughts entered the minds of these Chinese Christians; they do not reason that way. Without hesitation, Miss Atkinson and her co-workers took Mrs. Wong home with them. She went with them to all the services and listened quietly. The touch of Christ was upon her, and she found peace.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Wong were enrolled as probationers, and after a period of instruction were received into the church. Before long they both became strong leaders in the Changshu church. And all this came about because the delegates at an annual meeting of the missionary society had "looked happy."

The House that Love Built

TYPHUS FEVER, the disease that Miss Atkinson dreaded most in China! It struck her without warning, while she was in Changshu, far removed from any fully trained doctor. She had to be taken by houseboat to Soochow — five hours of agony for the patient and of suspense for her friends. There at the mission hospital, after careful diagnosis, the doctor said there was no hope. Fifty per cent of all typhus cases in China had proved fatal; she at the age of sixty-eight had no chance. The doctor was wrong. While her Chinese friends and the missionaries waited and prayed, she grew better day by day. On Christmas Eve she left the hospital on a stretcher for the Laura Haygood School and the loving care of Kate Hackney.

Of her illness Miss Atkinson said afterwards: "The thing that I dreaded most has been a blessed experience for me. It has shown me how my friends love me. They believe that my recovery was in answer to their prayers, and I am sure they are right."

After her recovery from typhus, Miss Atkinson, as a matter of course, returned to Changshu and her work in that city and district. But this illness, along with other elements of the situation, were causing her friends great concern. Her general health was failing perceptibly, and there were no adequate medical facilities in Changshu. The only access to the city was by canal boat, and in winter the canals were sometimes frozen over for weeks. Threats of war grew louder as Japanese encroachments increased. She might be caught in that interior city with no means of getting away. Soochow, on the contrary, had a fully equipped mission hospital and rail access to Shanghai. It was time, thought her friends, for her to come to Soochow and make her home there.

Some of her former pupils, those to whom she had been "Better than all the Mothers," were already making plans to build her a home. It was to be in West Soochow, where vision and faith had led her forty years before. When she was on a visit to that city in 1932, a number of these friends held a dinner party in her honor, and she learned for the first time of their plans. One of them.

speaking with great formality as befitting the importance of the occasion, said:

"Every proper Chinese son looks after his elderly mother. While it is true that you have no sons born of your own body, we, your pupils, are your spiritual posterity, and we propose to take care of you. You have now reached the age when you ought to rest. Our plan is to build a comfortable home in Soochow, which will be yours as long as you live. We can care for you properly if you are right here among us."

Miss Atkinson was overwhelmed. She had known that they loved her, but she had never dreamed of such a concrete expression of their love. She had never sought anything for herself, but now her hundred-fold was rolling in. Of course she had to promise that she would accept this gift, only stipulating that when she came she must keep on working. She reminded these "sons" that the type of Chinese mother who could sit still and be waited on was fast vanishing.

Circumstances helped to make it easy for her to leave Changshu. A new missionary, Miss Louise Avett, had been appointed there. She, with Mrs. Wesley Smith and the splendid Bible Women and teachers, could carry on the women's work.

At Christmas of that year the trustees of the Save-the-World Church presented her with the deed to a lot on the same compound as the new church and just in front of Dowdell Center. This land had been bought with money raised by the church. Soon she was asked to draw plans for the house, making it "just what she wanted." It was to be of gray brick, having downstairs a large living room and dining room combined, a kitchen, closets and a cement porch, and upstairs, four bedrooms with closets, and a bath. The furniture also was to be a part of the gift. When her friends found out that she had bought a small piano for the living room, they immediately presented her with money to cover the price.

Although this ideal home was being made ready, yet the uprooting in Changshu was not easy. She was glad she still had several months there before the new home would be finished. She had learned to love that city and its people so deeply that it was almost as hard to leave as it had been to leave Soochow fifteen years earlier.

When the time came it was equally hard for Changshu to give her up. Each unit of work planned its own send-off. From the two schools, the church membership, her group of co-workers, and towns in the district, came dinners, farewell programs and gifts. Most of the gifts were articles for use in the new home. A great crowd of school children and church members walked a long dis-

tance to the boat landing to wave her off, and the popping of firecrackers lasted as long as the boat was in sight. A party of friends, traveling with her in a chartered room on the launch, had been given the precious privilege of delivering her safe and sound to those waiting for her in Soochow.

Arriving in Soochow, she was claimed first by the Davidson School. A volley of firecrackers met her at the gate, and her rickshaw passed between two long lines of cheering school girls all the way to Louise Home, where the faculty welcome awaited. On went the rickshaw to Dowdell Center and the welcome from the girls and women of the Embroidery Mission, and also from the boys of Atkinson Academy, who were standing in military formation. A deputation of boys on bicycles, who had gone to meet the boat but had mistaken the place, now appeared at Dowdell Center, much chagrined but proudly waving banners inscribed: "Welcome to Miss Atkinson!"

Fortunately Miss Tarrant also was on hand to take the honored but weary guest to her apartment in Dowdell Center for an hour or two of rest.

In the meantime final preparations were going on in the new home for the reception at four o'clock. The house was not only furnished; it was also garnished and ready. Atkinson Academy and Davidson School had sent over a profusion of flowers to decorate the rooms and the verandah. About fifty guests, mostly former students who had been active in promoting the gift, were there to show their love and reverence.

In a letter to Mrs. Alice Johnson Miss Atkinson gave a lengthy description of the farewell in Changshu and the welcome in Soochow. The letter closes with the words: "It is sweet to be remembered, but why they have been so kind, I do not know. I only know that I have loved them, and that love begets love."

The first day was over. Miss Atkinson went to sleep that night in her own home in Soochow, "The House That Love Built."

November 17 of that year was the anniversary of her arrival in China exactly fifty years before, and this day was chosen as Founders' Day by Atkinson Academy. Thus the housewarming held on that day celebrated her coming to China, her fifty years of service, and her great achievement in this school, as well as her coming to live in the new home.

Miss Atkinson held open house in the new home, now beautiful with Chinese lanterns and chrysanthemums. A thousand students of the West Soochow schools filed through in groups. Then came the congregation of the Save-the-World Church and friends of the community and city.

Celebrations over, the work claimed her—in the schools, the church, and the district. In a letter to Mrs. Johnson she wrote: "I am now out on the district holding a short-term Bible school. When I return to Soochow it will be time for Christmas plans and more guests. It makes me so happy to have my own home for entertaining my Chinese friends. This precious new house shall always be used, so far as I am able, for the glory of God and the good and comfort of mankind."

Virginia Atkinson had come into a rich inheritance. A home to live in for the remainder of her life, and a grave to rest in at death, all as an expression of the love of those she had served. Surely now, living or dead, she would never have to leave China.

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"I Sat Where They Sat"

WAR CLOUDS were on the horizon when Miss Atkinson moved back to Soochow in 1934, but to her, happy in her home and in her work, they seemed of minor importance.

She had settled herself comfortably in the new house and had made it a home. It was beautifully furnished, for her friends had done their best, and their taste was good. Even after the furniture was complete, embroidered linens, fine porcelain, tapestries, and hand-painted and hand-written scrolls had come in such quantities that Mrs. Tsiang had given out the words, "No more gifts for the home, please. There is no more room."

After this the gifts were of food, and these were welcome, for the house was usually full of guests. Her Alabama friends, hearing of the constant entertaining, began to fear that it would bankrupt the hostess. But she assured them that "the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail." And when she told them that twelve dozen eggs had been presented in less than two months time, her friends ceased to worry about her food supply.

As the years passed, the house fulfilled the owner's ideal for it expressed in her words: "It is to be used for the glory of God and the good and comfort of mankind." Chinese deaconesses, Bible Women, and other Christian workers all over the Conference visited her when they were passing through. Committees found there a convenient gathering place. The sick or tired or discouraged knew they would find a welcome, as well as strength for the task ahead.

Nor was her ministry confined to her home. She had no regular appointment, yet she was kept busy. She was still in demand as a speaker and as teacher of Bible classes at the frequent short-term Bible schools and in the missionary societies. Her work now was going a little more slowly, and was more frequently interrupted by illness, but it was none the less effective.

She also had a prominent part in a second Jubilee celebration. The Chinese church, having joined in the celebration of the centenary of foreign missions of the whole Methodist church in 1918,

and in the Jubilee of the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions in 1928, now in 1935 held its own celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the China Annual Conference (later called the East China Conference).

The celebration was held at Moore Memorial, the largest church in Shanghai. Bishop Arthur J. Moore and other distinguished visitors came from America, and Bishop J. S. Ryang from Korea. Hundreds of delegates came, representing every church in the Conference, however humble. Along with the well-trained choirs from big city churches came one in country garb, artless but tuneful, from the village of Poh-liang, singing Christian hymns to native Chinese tunes.

An historical survey had been made and a Jubilee volume published. It was noted that there was only one missionary still in China who had been on the field when the Conference was organized fifty years before. That one was Virginia Atkinson. It was fitting that she should bring a greeting. This closed with the words: "I am grateful that my life has been spared so that I can be present at this happy occasion, and still more grateful that I have been allowed a part, though a small one, in the work of these fifty years. . . . Had I another life to live I would consider it a privilege and a joy to give it freely and more efficiently to China."

This was the pattern of Virginia Atkinson's life from the time of moving into her new home in 1931 until the summer of 1937. Then the war clouds that had been gathering for six years broke in fury.

The Nationalist government, established by Chiang Kai Shek in 1928, was in the 1930's making rapid progress toward real unification and economic development of China. Militaristic Japan, however, wanted China to remain weak, that she herself might grow rich by exploiting her populous, undeveloped neighbor. Therefore, in 1931, by a coup, which she called an "incident," she seized Manchuria. Encouraged by this success she struck again, this time at the important port city, Shanghai. The latter attack was quickly repelled by the Chinese defenders. Japan now saw that it would take a long and costly war to subjugate China, and both sides began to prepare in feverish haste for the final showdown.

In the summer of 1937, Japan was ready. In July, her army struck at the Marco Polo Bridge near Peiping, and in August at Shanghai. She did not at that time attack the International Settlement, which was still under the protection of foreign powers, but the sections of the city that were Chinese territory were heavily bombarded, and many bombs fell by accident in the Settlement.

That summer, Miss Atkinson was in her pleasant cottage on Mokanshan, hostess, as usual, to several friends needing a vacation. She heard of the Marco Polo Bridge "incident," and hoped the fighting would not develop into a war. But the radio brought news of one tragedy after another, until the accidental dropping of a bomb at a crowded intersection in the Settlement at Shanghai caused such slaughter that that day became known as "Black Saturday."

After "Black Saturday" the consuls in Shanghai began calling their nationals in. "Come to Shanghai," blared the radio. The Chinese government cooperated in bringing in the large foreign group on Mokanshan. The direct route being barred by the fighting in the environs of Shanghai, it was arranged that they should go by truck southward to the port of Ningpo, and thence by British steamer, convoyed by an American destroyer to Shanghai. The Japanese military also cooperated by ceasing fire long enough for these "third-party neutrals" to land, since they were not yet ready to become involved with neutral powers such as the United States.

Thus Miss Atkinson reached Shanghai, and was given refugee quarters in McTyeire School, safe from direct attack but very close to the frightening sounds of bombardment and of bomb explosions. She was tormented by fears for her beloved Soochow, which had already suffered occasional bombing, and which was in the direct line of attack if the Japanese army should break through the defenses of Shanghai.

As a relief from turmoil and anxiety she sought useful employment. Chinese refugees were flocking to the comparative security of the International Settlement. A city of three million had swelled to five million. Many refugees came without money or food. The Red Cross, augmented by volunteers from Shanghai and missionaries from the interior, took over. Huge mat-sheds were erected as refugee camps, and food was prepared and served by volunteer helpers. Miss Atkinson wanted to help in these camps, but the work was too strenuous for her state of health, and her offer was not accepted.

But she soon found plenty to do. She aided overburdened missionaries by writing letters for them. Knowing that absent missionaries would be anxious for news, she wrote to many of them. She took piecemeal from the sewing room of Moore Memorial Church, where a team of women were making layettes for the new babies expected in the refugee camps. She helped the deaconess of this church in her evangelistic work among the refugees quartered there. Her greatest contribution was in locating and aiding scattered

teachers, pastors and Bible Women of the interior, who had fled before the invading armies. As the fighting spread inward, more and more of these workers filtered into Shanghai. They brought stories like these:

A pastor, who with his family had first sought refuge farther inland, had lost his wife and now was left with four small children. He had saved little, and naturally he had no salary, as his church members were scattered and most of them as destitute as he.

A teacher reported that his wife and two teen-age daughters had fled to a country hamlet for safety from the Japanese army, and there had been kidnapped by robbers and held for ransom.

Mrs. Tsiang, when Soochow was about to be besieged, had fled with other refugees to a village where they were safe from bombs but beset with dangers day and night from roving bands of soldiers. Mrs. Tsiang also risked her life by returning to Soochow under fire to get two account books, one for Davidson School, the other for the Manchurian Mission, of which she was treasurer.

One day two young women teachers from West Soochow, who had been fleeing from province to province, arrived at Moore Memorial. This crowded church could furnish them with only a table-top as bed. They had saved nothing but the clothes they were wearing, and one quilt each. Miss Atkinson found them in this plight, and was able to get a place for them in the attic at McTyeire. Fortunately, at this time some relief funds reached her from friends in Alabama, and so she was able to provide for their needs until they found jobs.

As she listened to the experiences of these and others, the inspiration came to her to collect their stories in writing. A young business woman from Soochow helped her to get the narratives translated into English and then typed and duplicated. She sent many of these articles to friends at home to help people there to know and to appreciate the spirit of these Chinese Christians, many of whom had told her that they now knew better how to pray, to trust, and to praise God than they ever could have known in the old life.

In November, 1937, Soochow fell to the enemy, but several months elapsed before news of conditions there reached Miss Atkinson. Then she learned that the buildings of the West Soochow Mission had not been destroyed, but that they had all been plundered and several had been occupied by enemy soldiers, among them her own home. She wrote at the time:

"Indirect news from Soochow says that my house is still standing although looted of everything in it. I have prayed that it might be left to me, and I have promised that if it should be spared I

would receive it afresh as a gift from God's hands and would go to work to furnish it anew. I want my little home. I shall need it for my distressed Chinese friends, to whom I must give physical as well as spiritual comfort."

In the summer of 1938 things were quieter in Soochow, as the fighting had passed on farther into the interior, and that city had become a part of "Occupied China." Chinese who had fled were now venturing back, some to ruined homes or to ruined businesses. There were still hordes of Japanese soldiers inside the city, as well as military police at every street corner. Outside the city were Chinese guerrillas and bandits. But the Japanese authorities were at last beginning to issue permits to Americans to travel, and so Miss Tarrant went to Dowdell Center and other missionaries to Moka Garden, Laura Haygood, Palace Avenue and Soochow University.

Mission buildings were being recovered from the soldier occupants, sometimes after prolonged negotiation. Then they had to be repaired and cleaned. Lye and whitewash did wonders for looks as well as for sanitation. Churches that had been used as places of amusement again became centers of Christian worship. Several schools were reopened in September. Students either brought their own chairs and tables or used boxes for chairs and rough boards for desks. Even so, parents were willing to pay tuition, and the schools had good enrollments.

Learning of the activities going on in Soochow, Miss Atkinson became restless in Shanghai. If others could go back, why not she? But she was strongly advised by mission authorities not to go; only the more robust could stand the rigorous living conditions in Soochow.

By autumn, conditions in Soochow were better. Miss Tarrant was having Miss Atkinson's house repaired. Medical facilities were more adequate. Having new hopes of early return, she began to look about for things she needed, as her house had only the kitchen stove, two chairs, and one wardrobe. She found some good furniture at third-hand prices, and some dishes. Her friends heard that she was going back, and also of the bareness of the home; so they managed to give her a shower — not of embroideries and porcelains for ornament, but of frying pans and mixing bowls for her kitchen. A group of Davidson graduates pooled their resources and bought a down quilt.

And so, after fourteen months of exile, she returned to Soochow. It was the last week of November, 1938, and she was armed with the permit from the Japanese military authorities and also with

the approval of the mission. Her house had been put in good shape, and the repairs had been paid for out of a reserve fund that had been presented to her along with the house. The house was not furnished as in the beginning, when her friends had given richly of their abundance. Now, they gave again, most of them out of deep poverty. It was still "The House That Love Built."

Of the return she wrote: "I am now able to obey the injunction of the apostle and take joyfully the spoiling of my goods. My Chinese friends have lost their possessions too. When I was with them in Shanghai, 'I sat where they sat,' as the prophet Ezekiel said of himself and the exiles in Babylon, and I am still doing so in Soochow. We can understand each other better now. My little home was spared to me by God. What I asked of Him was to leave me my Chinese friends' lives and honor, and my home in which to receive them. He granted my prayer, and I am happy — happier than a queen."

Evacuation "For Conscience' Sake"

IT WAS LATE in October, 1940. Miss Atkinson had been living for two years in her Soochow home, and was now planning a visit to Shanghai. Travel was next to impossible in Occupied China in that era of red tape, passes, and rigid military supervision by sentries posted along the way. But two old friends were due to arrive from furlough and she wanted to meet them. One was Kate Hackney returning to Laura Haygood, then carrying on in rented quarters in Shanghai; the other was this writer, whom she was expecting to take back to Soochow for a visit.

Miss Hackney and I were counting ourselves fortunate because we had sailed out through the Golden Gate just before the radio-gram was sent out from Washington advising all American women and children in China to return to the States. It was not imperative enough to cause our women missionaries to leave their posts, but it did cause Mission Boards to refrain from sending any more missionaries to China. And it was an indication of the fact that conditions in China and also relations between the United States and Japan were worsening.

When Miss Atkinson met us in Shanghai, I found that she was very weak from a recent attack of dengue fever. On the day she had expected to take me to Soochow she came down with influenza. I stayed in Shanghai a month to nurse her through this illness. The influenza, together with the increasing seriousness of the war situation, led the mission authorities to decide that it was not best for Miss Atkinson to return to Soochow.

She was feeling better but was still very weak when she had the great happiness of a visit from the wife of the principal of Atkinson Academy. This lady had braved the difficulties and dangers of travel to bring Miss Atkinson a description of the celebration that the school had held on November eighth in honor of her seventy-ninth birthday. She brought the red-and-gold "longevity" decorations they had used, and draped the bedroom walls with these gorgeous hangings. The gifts presented by the faculty and students

covered the bed in bright array. Photographs taken on this occasion were the subject of animated discussion. These indicated, as Miss Atkinson was happy to see, that the school was in thriving condition.

Since she could not leave Shanghai a small apartment was rented for her in the home of a Chinese Christian lady, Mrs. T. Here she had the friendship and loving sympathy of the family hitherto unknown to her, and especially of the teen-age son and daughter and their young college friends, all of whom called her "Grandmother Gold." Of her sojourn in this apartment she wrote: "My room became a veritable sanctuary by reason of God's presence and help. Many of my friends came, and also friends of Mrs. T. And so her friends became mine and mine hers. Her son and daughter were like my own grandchildren."

Because of disturbed conditions in Shanghai, as well as her own ill health, she very seldom went out. But whenever it was possible she went on Sunday morning to Moore Memorial Church and sat in the lobby to see her Chinese friends as they came and went. They were equally happy to see her, after her two years' absence in Soochow. She said of these visits, "I did not go into the sanctuary, that was so crowded that I feared I might deprive someone of a seat. But I saw and talked to many of my friends from places I had formerly served. Some had lost their homes, some were in dire poverty, some had lost loved ones. All were in need of comfort, and I was glad to give them that in abundance."

Comfortably settled in Mrs. T.'s apartment, Miss Atkinson was sure she had a place where she could stay for the duration of the war, or until conditions permitted her to return to Soochow.

But no! Early in January, 1941, Dr. Fred P. Manget, mission physician and head of the evacuation committee, appeared at her door. He had her ticket to America in his pocket.

He believed that war between Japan and the United States was inevitable, and he wanted this aged, enfeebled missionary — his dear friend — out of China. He did not use that approach, however. He tactfully said, "I believe it will be better for the Chinese if we Americans get out of the way."

The doctor had struck at her vulnerable point. He pressed his advantage. "I, myself, am going to leave in six days. And here is your ticket! I will look after you all the way. Will you go?"

"But how," gasped the dazed missionary, "would I get back to China? The Board would never finance my return — not at my age."

"That need not trouble you," replied the doctor. "I will personally assume the responsibility and secure the funds for your

return." She was weakening. "Remember," he continued, "it is for the sake of the Chinese."

"I will go," she said. "It is the hardest decision I have ever had to make. But if it is better for my people, then I will go for conscience' sake."

Of the preparation and departure, and the journey under the care of Dr. Manget, Miss Atkinson wrote:

After fifty-six years of happy service in China, it seemed impossible to get ready to leave in six days. But Dr. Manget wired for Miss White, and she and Miss Hackney did my packing. My rooms were always filled with friends who came to say goodbye and to tell me how sorry they were to give me up. When I boarded the steamer I think that every friend that I had in Shanghai, Chinese and American, was at the wharf to wave goodbye. I knew I must be brave, and they told me afterwards that I was very brave.

Dr. Manget was a wonderful friend. His care on the steamer and on the train made the journey the most pleasant of all my trips across the Pacific. I recommend him as a friend, doctor, and traveling companion, and I am looking forward to the return trip with him. For my heart is still in China with my suffering friends.

Jennie, the Aged, Seeks A Home

ONE BRIGHT hope sustained Miss Atkinson on the long journey home. Since she had to spend a while in America, she would go straight to Carrie, who had always wanted "Cousin Jennie" to share her lovely home in Opelika, Alabama. All during the war years she had repeatedly urged her to leave the field and come to live with her.

When the train rolled in to Opelika, Carrie was at the station to meet her. But she looked different somehow. She explained that her son, John, had died, and that the big house had been sold. It was obvious that Carrie could not give her a home. The weary traveler remained for a visit, and tried to comfort her bereaved cousin, but she had received a shattering blow. Her foster parents and their son, Wilna, were dead. To whom could she turn?

Wilna's daughter, Mrs. W. C. Oates, came and took her to her home. Mrs. Alice Johnson, "Little Florence" (Mrs. W. W. Bonner), and others invited her to their homes. But though she went to them for visits, her fear of illness made her unwilling to risk becoming a burden.

She was just "little Jennie," once more seeking a home. It had happened when she was eight. Now it had happened again, when she was nearly eighty.

It was Miss Mary A. Hood, R.N., of Brownsville, Tennessee, who solved the problem. Miss Hood had served as nurse in the Methodist Mission in China for thirty-one years, about half of which time had been spent in Soochow. She had come home only a few weeks ahead of Miss Atkinson. She learned now of her friend's return, and renewed the invitation which she had once given in China. "As soon as I heard that Miss Atkinson was coming to America," she said, "I took it for granted that she would live with me. There were serious obstacles, but I knew I could overcome them all."

First, she had to convince Miss Atkinson that she really wanted her, and that she wished to take care of her, sick or well. Next, she had to get the tenants out of her house — a thing well-nigh

impossible in 1941. Finally, she had to furnish the house completely, as she had never lived in it herself. She said later that it was by prayer that she overcame these obstacles and had everything ready in six weeks' time.

Miss Atkinson's health had improved rapidly during her first few weeks in America, and she was at this time on a round of visits and speech making. She felt that her service now was writing letters to friends in China and speaking about China to friends in America. She said about it, "I am grateful that God is letting unworthy me help a little by comforting people over there and by informing people over here."

By this time the home was ready for her. It was more like the little house she had left in Soochow than anything else she could have found in the States. It was beautiful with Chinese things — rugs, pictures and scrolls, lamps, dishes, linens, and curios. All the lovely things Miss Hood had brought on her several furloughs were now gathered in this little home. Miss Atkinson's bedroom breathed a welcome. Beside an open grate fire was a shapely rocker — and a footstool. The bed was big and comfortable, and there was a desk for her typewriter. Best of all was the loving and capable Mary Hood, who had the same China background as her guest, and a big and understanding heart.

Without seeming to be unduly busy, Miss Hood was nurse, house-keeper, cook, dietician, and companion. She even found time to plant a garden and so had fresh vegetables nearly all the time. Miss Atkinson's eyes were too weak for her to read or type constantly, though they had improved greatly since she had been in America. So Miss Hood supplied diversion by playing with her the games she liked best, chief among which was Chinese checkers.

Miss Atkinson was grateful for all the love and care that Miss Hood was giving her, and most of the time she was cheerful and happy. But sometimes homesickness for China overcame her. Had she done right in leaving China? She worried about conditions in her adopted country and longed to be there, to help. Fortunately, many of Miss Hood's friends came to call, and she found relief in telling them of her experiences in China. Miss Hood said later:

"People who came to see us were so charmed with Miss Atkinson that I was the envy of everyone in Brownsville — Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians. True, I did everything I could for her comfort, but I had a rich reward, for she did as much for me spiritually as I did for her physically. It was a fifty-fifty service."

Several of Miss Atkinson's co-workers in China, Misses Tarrant,

Rogers, and Hackney, came at times for visits. And then, to make her happiness as complete as it could be in America, one of her Chinese daughters who had fled for safety to this country came with her husband to see "Mother Gold." This was Mrs. Timothy Lew — the little Katherine who at the age of four had been won to Christ through her love for the young missionary. She was the one whose home Miss Atkinson had visited in Peiping in 1924. Since that time both Katherine and Dr. Lew had gone on with their studies, their service, and their triumphs. Katherine had now the Ph.D. degree, and an honorary LL.D. Her husband had become a world figure, known in all international Christian gatherings as a preacher, a scholar, a theologian, a hymn writer, and a religious leader. Perhaps he was best known for a sentence which he had coined on one occasion to quiet contending theologians. It was this: "Let us agree to differ, resolve to love and unite to serve."

This was the distinguished couple who came from New York to Brownsville, Tennessee, to greet the one who had given Katherine her start in life. It was a happy visit — one that Miss Atkinson felt took her straight back to China.

By her faithful letter writing Miss Atkinson kept in touch with friends in China. But this was not enough. She constantly denied herself in order to send back money from her own salary and from gifts intended for her personal use. This sharing not only helped the needy in China; it also helped to ease the longing that was always in her own heart.

. 24 .

Goodnight, Brave Jennie

IT WAS SEPTEMBER, 1941, and Miss Atkinson had been nine months in America. She was happy in her life with her old friend, Mary Hood, but to her this was temporary — she was going back to China. She was going to get strong and well, and Dr. Manget would carry out his promise that when the time came he would take her back.

Now came a letter from Dr. Manget. It explained that the time had not yet come. (He knew, as she did not, that the United States government, in anticipation of war between America and Japan, had sent three ships to the Far East, and was urging "women, children, and non-essential men" to come to America.) He himself, he told her, was going to Burma as army surgeon. However, he hoped to be able to take her, after two years, with his wife and sister, Mrs. Logan, to China.

It was a heavy blow. In a letter at that time Miss Atkinson said: "I am growing older every day. I feel that I cannot stay away from my people two more years. They need me, and I want and need them."

There was another disappointment about this time, which she would hardly acknowledge even to herself. Her high blood pressure had returned, and with it the painful arthritis. In China she had had illnesses and recovered. Now she seemed to have no power of recuperation. Her doctor said that she had been so weakened by previous illnesses that her heart was seriously affected.

She gradually sensed the possibility that she might not recover, and one day she told Miss Hood of her heaviest anxiety: "I want to die in China. I want my body to rest in that grave that Mrs. Tsiang prepared for me beside her own. If I should die in America, do you think that my body could be cremated and my ashes sent to China?" Miss Hood promised to do all in her power to carry out this plan and she secured a letter from the Board of Missions authorizing this procedure. The letter said that prominent Chinese in New York had been consulted and they considered it very fitting.

Miss Atkinson rallied in time for her birthday, November 8. Miss Hood had planned a surprise party. A "Happy Birthday" cake was surrounded by eighty candles, the house was decorated with chrysanthemums and autumn leaves, and Miss Tarrant had arrived for a visit. Miss Atkinson had been in bed for several days, but she felt like getting up when Miss Tarrant asked, "Don't you want to put on your prettiest Chinese robe? I'd like to see it."

When she appeared in the lovely brocade, the thirty guests sang "Happy Birthday!" and led her into the dining room. She was feeling shy, as she always did when honored, but they pushed her forward, and she cut the first slice of the big cake. Back in the living room was a basketful of birthday cards for her to exclaim over. Miss Tarrant sang Chinese folk songs, and Miss Atkinson told a Chinese story. The party and the loving attentions of her friends had given her new life. We in Shanghai heard of the party over short-wave radio. Miss Hood had sent a report to KGEI in San Francisco, which was broadcasting messages from people in America as their only way of communicating with friends in Occupied China.

China was also celebrating this eightieth milestone. Pupils and friends in both Shanghai and Soochow braved the wrath of puppet rulers to celebrate Grandma Gold's "big" birthday. Scores of letters were written on that day and were slipped off by an indirect route to America.

I have these letters by me as I am finishing this biography. They breathe love, devotion, and gratitude, all combined in a fervent hope for her return. The one to whom they were written never saw them, for they arrived too late. By December 1 her condition was so much worse that she was taken to the Methodist hospital in Memphis. Miss Hood went with her and did all the night nursing. Katherine Lew came from New York to help. Miss Tarrant was there, and Mrs. Bennett Hine, the daughter of "Twin-Cousin Carrie." Every day the patient would ask, "Doctor Blue, are you going to get me well enough to go back to China?" and his answer was always, "Yes, Miss Atkinson."

Sunday, December 7, arrived. It was Pearl Harbor Day, but Miss Atkinson in that hospital room knew nothing about the blow that shook America to the foundations. But she did know that she wanted to go back to China.

On Thursday, December 11, her breathing was very shallow. Slowly her lips formed the words: "I - want - to - go - back - to - China." Miss Hood and the others thought that these words would be her last. But no, she was speaking again. This time it was to the one who had given her a home in America: "Mary Hood, I - love -

you." She lapsed into unconsciousness, her body relaxed. Early the next morning she slipped quietly away.

Jennie had fared forth on her final journey. At last she had found a home that she would never have to leave, a work from which she would never have to retire.

* * *

This book is being published while atheistic Communists are in complete control of China. All missionaries not imprisoned or so restricted that they are unable to carry on work, have had to leave. Perhaps the reader is asking, "Isn't Jennie's work lost?"

The answer is the same that God gave to David, the enthusiast, who said, "I will build a house for the Lord, a splendid temple worthy of His name."

And the prophet Nathan encouraged him, saying, "Do all that is in thine heart."

But that night God said to Nathan, "You were wrong. Go now and tell David: 'Thou shalt not build me a house. But I will build for thee a house - thy posterity. And it shall come to pass that when thy days are done and thou dost sleep with thy fathers I will raise up thy seed after thee. Thy son shall build me a house, and I will not take my mercy from him. I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.'"

In China Jennie Atkinson built lives. Her schoolhouses and churches - places of instruction and places of worship - were all for the purpose of building godly lives. And I am sure that God said to her something like this: "I accept the purpose of thine heart concerning this building that thou hast done for me. But I will do a better thing for thee. Although these schools may be taken over and used as places of Communist propaganda, these churches driven underground or so hedged about that their ministers can preach only fragments of the word of the Lord, yet out of the lives that thou hast re-created, I will build for thee spiritual sons and daughters. They shall form a family or "house" that is indestructible - one that will grow from generation to generation. Though persecution may come upon them, thy seed and their seed will continue to build, and I will establish that HOUSE forever."

And so today behind the iron curtain Jennie Atkinson's spiritual children are building, with God, a house that will stand. Persecution has never destroyed the Christian church in any land, and it will not destroy it in China.

And now, goodnight, brave Jennie. We salute you for your ability and your achievements; but we honor you most because out of weakness you were made strong, out of fear you plucked courage.

. Appendix .

LIST OF THOSE WHO SERVED WITH MISS ATKINSON IN WEST SOOCHOW

IN CLOSING an article about the West Soochow work Miss Atkinson wrote: "I have not been able to mention many of my fellow workers, but I cannot bear to leave out one, so I give below a list of those who labored for longer or shorter periods in the West Soochow work." The author of *Just Jennie* feels the same way, so Miss Atkinson's list is now given as an appendix to the book.

NOTE: The number of years after each name indicates the time which that person served in WEST SOOCHOW. Many named here worked for long periods in other stations in China.

Name	Type of Work	Approximate Term of Service
Lizzie Martin	Teacher	3 Years
Susie E. Williams (Mrs. A. P. Parker)	Embroidery Mission and Teacher	6 Years
Mary M. Tarrant	Teacher — later Principal of Atkinson	39 Years
May Culler White	Embroidery Mission and Teacher	5 Years
Maggie J. Rogers	Teacher in Davidson	8 Years
Emma Service Lester (Mrs. Lewis Chase)	Embroidery Mission and Teacher in Davidson	7 Years
Flora Herndon (Mrs. Herndon)	Teacher in Davidson	1 Year
Madge Hendry (Mrs. A. G. Fegert)	Music Teacher — Davidson	5 Years
Frances Burkhead	Embroidery Mission	15 Years
Louise Robinson	Teacher — Later Principal of Davidson	5 Years
Nina Stallings	Embroidery Mission	2 Years

Appendix

Name	Type of Work	Approximate Term of Service
Bertha O. Attaway (Mrs. B. O. A. Price)	Teacher in Davidson	4 Years
Nevada Martin (Mrs. Calender)	Kindergarten Training School	5 Years
Kate Hackney	Kindergarten Training School	3 Years
Mary Lou White	Teacher in Davidson	1 Year
Margaret Beadle (Mrs. Stirling Brinkley)	Teacher in Davidson	4 Years
Dora Otis (Mrs. M. E. Mitchell)	Embroidery Mission	2 Years
Olive Lipscomb (Mrs. Sidney R. Anderson)	Principal of Davidson	1 Year
Lillian Knobles (Mrs. Cyrus B. Dawsey)	Teacher — Later Principal of Davidson	4 Years
Floss McKnight	Teacher in Davidson	5 Years
Grace Haight (Visitor to Field)	Teacher	1 Year
Mrs. Maude Henderson (Visitor to Field)	Teacher in Davidson and Atkinson	1 Year
Elizabeth Dent (Mrs. Frank Ferguson)	Teacher in Davidson	3 Years
Mrs. Julia A. Gaither	Supervisor of Bible Women	2 Years
Mary Winn	Teacher in Davidson	11 Years
Clara E. Steger	Teacher in Atkinson	1 Year
Eleanor Allen	Teacher in Davidson and Atkinson	3 Years
Annie Campbell	Teacher in Davidson and Atkinson	2 Years
Naomi Howie	Teacher in Davidson	10 Years
Robbie Lee Leggett	Davidson and Em- broidery Mission	2 Years
Mittie Shelton	Embroidery Mission	5 Years
Elizabeth Claiborne	Teacher in Atkinson	1 Year
Carnelia Crozier	Teacher in Atkinson	1 Year
Nattie Peacock	Evangelistic Work	3 Years

MARY CULLER WHITE was born in Perry, Georgia in 1875, reared in Hawkinsville, Georgia and educated at historic Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia – the oldest chartered college for women in the world. Her greatest ambition was to become an artist, so she majored in that field and continued her studies after graduation. She became an art teacher, but one day she read this sentence in a letter addressed to an artist. "I thought you would stop painting pictures that the world does not really need and go to making lives that the world is so sorely in need of." Miss White stopped! She entered Scarritt Bible and Training School and after her graduation was sent to China as a missionary in 1901.

Her main work was evangelism and she rode her circuit in a crude houseboat where she lived with the Chinese night and day, speaking their language, eating their food and wearing their clothes.

When the war of Japan against China began in 1937 all Americans in the coastal areas had to run, but instead of running to a port city, Miss White ran to the mountains, taking her staff of attractive young Chinese women with her. The Japanese soldiers came and menaced the women, but Miss White stood her ground, prayer prevailed, and no women were dragged off.

Before Pearl Harbor, as a lone American, she was able to remain for eight months on a mountain between the two armies where there were 5,000 Chinese refugees who looked to her for protection. No serious harm befell them.

When Pearl Harbor came all was different. Miss White was at first restricted and then interned by the Japanese. But she says she was not mistreated. After seven months of confinement, she was chosen, in September, 1943, as one to be repatriated on the Exchange Ship, Gripsholm.

She is now retired with headquarters at Oxford, Georgia, but she keeps busy lecturing, teaching Bible Classes, and writing. JUST JENNIE is her third book since her return to the States.



MARY CULLER WHITE

About the Author