

Korea's Pig and Other Burdens

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HOW funny we look to each other! And the funny part of it all is that the laugh we have at the other fellow is the echo of his laugh at us. The Korean who laughs at the American mother who sings, "This Little Pig Went to Market," as she counts off the toes of her baby girl, carries his pig to market on his back.

Strange indeed is it to us to see a whole nation making of themselves beasts of burden. For not only does Brother Pig ride to market on the back of his Korean owner, but nearly all else that has to be brought to the shambles enjoys a like honorable carriage. The toiler in the rice paddies lugs his harvest of sheaves into the storehouse on his shoulders. Brick-makers, potters, hat venders—all carry their wares in the same manner.

And odd company do they have as they journey along the way. Good spirits, bad spirits, little spirits, big spirits—all assuring the toiler with his burden that a share of his profits and harvests belongs to them, as an offering for their good favor.

To assist these multitudinous harpies of the air comes an army of sorcerers and sorceresses, enforcing the demands which these poor and ignorant people feel compelled to meet. Sky gods, thunder gods, tree gods, mountain gods, disease gods—gods without number, await the offering of rice and corn and beans, until there is little left for the poor Korean, and he is in reality kept poor.

Yet the fourteen million inhabitants of Korea are of a strong, sturdy race. They have a good physique. Their minds are keen. And they are teachable.

Their great difficulty is that they have carried the pig on their backs through the years, and the load has been so heavy that they have been unable to rise to their best while they have carried their burden. But the pig will soon have to go to market in a cart. For a people able, as far back as the sixteenth century, to devise an iron-clad war vessel, shaped like a tortoise, with a head used for ramming, and scales that lifted to let forth fire arrows, and who "used movable metal type before the days of Gutenberg," will not always let a few score pounds of pork hold them down to the level of a work horse. Once the load is cast off the sorcerers will be throttled and the demons of the air corked up in bottles and sunk in the deep blue sea.

This new day is even at hand. Thousands of Korean men and women have learned a way that is new to them, that

there is but one God, Jehovah, and that the spirits, familiar and unfamiliar, which have harassed them, are impostors, yea, do not even exist. And when the pig was laid down by the side of the road, as man after man stopped to think over this new conception, the wayfarer discovered beneath the callous worn on his shoulders a burden not due to his pigship. For when the Korean tried to straighten up to this new idea of One God, a merciful Father, a Saviour Jesus Christ, he found a kink that would not permit his full stature to assert itself. There was a burden of which he had been unconscious.

In vain he sought to lay it off beside the pig. He could not do it. It was neither pork nor merchandise. It was the burden of the ages—sin. It would not even pry off. It was a spiritual burden. Devotions at the wayside mountain shrine availed him nothing. The spirits to whose prosperity he had always contributed only fastened the load on tighter. But when, with his heart heavy and sad, he came out of the shrine house, to load Mr. Pig on his back once more, he met a man.

This man relieved him of his burden. No, he did not buy the pig. He was not in that business. He was a messenger. He opened his book of messages. It was written in a foreign tongue. But the messenger read and translated:

“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be

red like crimson, they shall be as wool." "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest."

A heavy message! Yes, indeed. But that item about "rest" was understood. So the messenger carefully explained the entire message. They knelt together before a God who was able to help. And the burden-bearer of Korea, aye, thousands of them, are today singing the truths that we here know so well. It means something when from home after home scattered throughout Korea is heard ringing in joyous thanksgiving:

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
 'Come unto Me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
 Thy head upon My breast!"
I came to Jesus as I was,
 Weary and worn and sad;
I found in Him a resting place,
 And He has made me glad."

Korea is a queer country! Those enormous hats worn by the women make our door-wide productions look like a natty "ding-a-ling." The youth just entered into manhood, with his flowing coat, wide pantaloons, and hat more ludicrous than "the hat my granddad wore," gives dudedom in

the States a handicap and comes in first. The queerest thing of all, however, is that in God's sight these folk are one with us.

It is only when we get down close to the ant-heaps that we are able to see the real differences and the real likenesses of the busy little toilers. We even need a magnifying glass at times. Even so with the human race. The Book is the glass that brings all into sharp relief. And He who made "of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth," is through the Book forcing all men to realize their common likeness in the image of God, their common sin, and a common Saviour.

They call the man with the message that met the Korean with the pig a missionary. The folk of Isaiah's time called them prophets. Apostolic days knew them as disciples and apostles. What's in a name? The messengers of the gospel are relieving the weary of their burden and are leading Korea to Christ. The queer things all melt away in our tears, and we shout aloud for very joy!

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