

## BOOK OF THE WEEK.

## "A WIND FROM THE WILDERNESS."\*

This story of the tragedy mingled with romance of a mission-station in Northern China, the incidents of which took place during and in consequence of a native rising, is both original and deeply interesting.

The happenings of that stirring and tragic time are recorded by four different persons, Dr. Rosalie Grahame, of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, aged twenty-five, talented and charming; Martin Conant, also young and handsome, at that time more or less of a pacifist, who came out to China to investigate missionary life ("young fool! what I wanted was to feel myself of some importance"). Silas Chapman and his foolish, selfish, pretty little wife who arrived at the station as they fled from the uprising. These persons of widely differing temperament present the picture of those troublous times from their own angle and very absorbing reading it makes.

Dr. Rosalie gives a vivid description of the various persons comprising the mission, which she describes as a one-horse affair, by which she intends to convey that it was a very narrow sect.

Rosalie, of course, was there on her own job, which was to alleviate as far as possible the diseases peculiar to the nation. She is a delightful *raconteuse* with a great sense of humour and we feel sure our readers who are dog-lovers will appreciate "MacTavish," the Japanese pug, "the dearest, prettiest little man"; Chung, the imperturbable, capable Chinese servant, is a masterly piece of drawing.

Rosalie's medical training has only accentuated her sympathetic heart, and her horror of the torture of ingrowing eyelashes and bound feet wring from her forcible expressions quite unsuited to a missionary station.

"My dear," said a voice, softly remonstrant, beside me, and I looked round to see MacTavish standing on his hind legs to greet the minister's wife.

I pointed to the crippled foot. "Isn't it enough to make anybody say 'damn'?"

"Come, my dear," she went on in her gentle voice. "Come to noonday prayers."

I patted her withered cheek gently. "I'll come then." I'd have done anything I could for her.

We get a delightful picture of Rosalie, drawn by Martin Conant, who assures us he is not the least in love with her. It makes him smile when she says she has no faith at all. "Her greatest charm is her radiant smile, which lights up her whole face. When I found what a wealth of love she bestows on her little dog, I knew she must be very lonely. She evidently got some comfort out of kissing the top of his lucky little head.

"Twice engaged, and each time the man failed her, and she is one of the most attractive women I ever met."

Chung is described by Rosalie as looking as if he had stepped out of a comic opera.

He had accompanied the Chapmans on their flight, but was not on that account disturbed from his sincerity.

They were a curious trio these refugees, the hard practical man, his insincere little wife and the placid Chung.

"Chung," said his mistress, exhausted from the hardships of her flight, "wanchee shoe."

"By em by," said Chung, serenely, "in bottom side littee," and by way of showing how truly amicable he was, he stooped and picked one of MacTavish white hairs from my dress.

"Never mind the dog's hairs," I said.

"Fezzers," he said, with a little flicker of his fan. "Missee have hairs, dogs and cats has fezzers."

"Oh never mind," said his mistress, impatiently, "wanchee shoe, wanchee brush, wanchee clean dress."

"Bottomside mule littee," said Chung indifferently.

It was from Chung that the mission first heard of the massacre of one of their members.

"Mr. Maitland friend of yours?" he asked, casually.

"Sure," said the minister; "but how does Henry Maitland butt in?"

"Oh, he no butt in," said Chung, throwing back his head and swinging his long pig-tail from shoulder to shoulder, while he fanned himself delicately. "He dead."

"I've heard bluffs like that before," said the minister, putting his hand on Chung's shoulder.

"Damn sure thing," asserted Chung with conviction.

It was then that the horror of their position was made clear to the mission members and the heroism of these apparently narrow-minded and joyless people is revealed in their various ways.

But it was during their long wandering that the really exciting incidents took place. The party was soon reduced by death and other causes, till it consisted only of Dr. Rosalie, Martin Conant, Stella Chapman, and, of course, MacTavish. A heart-rending scene takes place when MacTavish is left behind as a hostage.

It is Martin Conant who records it.

"The little thing looked up into his mistress's face as if asking if she would really give him up. He hates and fears the Chinese.

"My little dog! My little dog!" She turned, holding him so loosely that the man might take him if he wanted to.

He made a snatch and the little chap growled, so she put him into his arms and said in Chinese, with a quiver in her pretty voice, "Kindness should be practised, and he will reward with great love."

As may be supposed, two such charming people as Rosalie and Martin did not share such perils and hardships together without the inevitable coming about. But poor Rosalie, for the third time, misses the fulfilment of her dreams. We are glad to say that Martin's pacifist ideas were short-lived when the call came.

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\* By Mary Gaunt. (T. Werner Laurie, Ltd.)

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