

WHAT EASTER MEANS IN CHINA.

Easter time in China! How well I remember our first weekend out at one of our villages in Hunan. We set off on Thursday morning, a fairly imposing party—two women missionaries, two coolies for baggage (for it meant carrying our bedding, eatables, washing utensils, etc., etc.) and two chairs, each carried by two coolies. The folks stared so hard at us as we went down our street! But oh how lovely to get out into the countryside where the bamboo trees were waving their lacey branches; the birds were singing and flitting hither and thither in the early morning sunlight, everything smelt so clean and fresh, even the fields seemed glad as the little channels of water found their way in and out amongst the terraces of rice, etc.

The little Church to which we were going is about 90 miles away from our town, built by the members themselves out of real love to God. They themselves are very poor, but having heard about Jesus and realising a little of what He meant to them, they set about building their own Church where they all meet together to talk about him and sing His praises. It was lovely to see all their faces lit up when we arrived! Some had come in from long distances for the Easter Meetings, others whose work tied them to the fields went out in the early morning and returned to talk about Him and His love in the evening. And oh how they sang that Sunday morning.

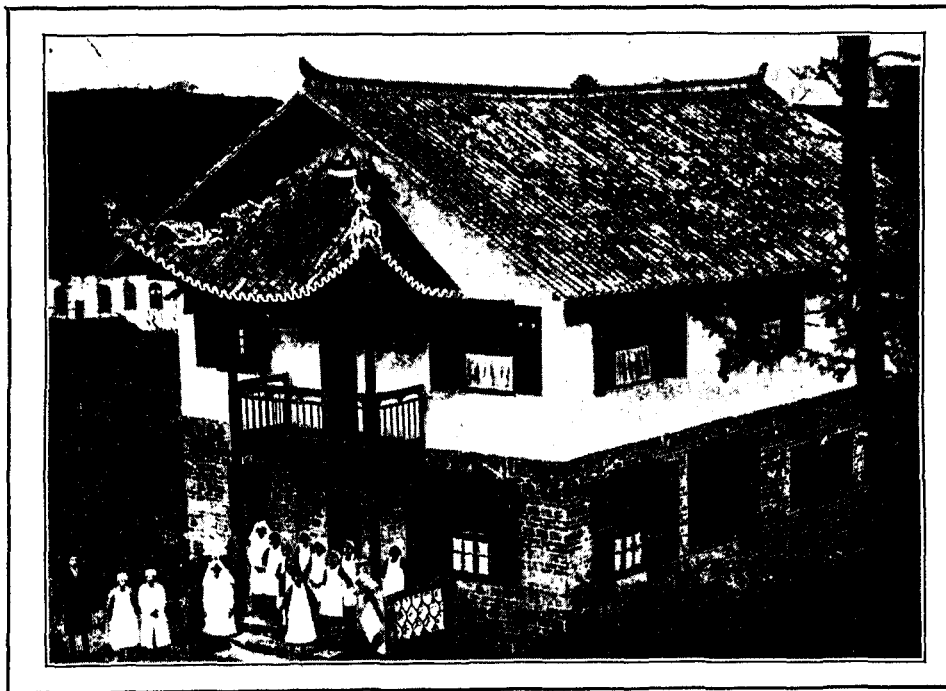
Not in tune maybe, but certainly full hearts. This little Church, set away among the country villages with their rice fields and vegetable gardens, their boys and girls growing up around them in the homesteads—it seemed to me to be so typical of the early Church with its simple faith looking in the face of Jesus with the Easter love and joy in their eyes.

Our Hospital of 65 beds is situated outside the city gates of Paoking—a market town with a population of 50,000 people, and we attend to patients coming from all round the countryside, often as far as 100 miles distant. The majority of these people have never heard of Jesus when they come to us, but at Easter time and for some time beforehand we have special readings in the Ward prayers, references are made to the coming Festival, the wards are decorated with leaves and flowers and pictures, making the Hospital beautiful. The Church is decorated also, the members and nurses going out on to the hillsides gathering lovely leaves and wild flowers, special Services are held, and as many of the patients as can walk go to Church.

In China there is a special feast in the spring called Chin Ming. At this time the Chinese make long pilgrimages to the graves of their families, here they decorate the graves with red and white paper streamers, prayer papers; offerings are made at the graves of food and fruit; paper money and paper houses, etc., are burned to propitiate the gods, there is much weeping and weeping, thousands of fire crackers are set off, and



Nursing and Medical Staff, April 1932, Paoking, Hunan, China.



The New Nurses' Home for Girl Nurses, opened November, 1931, Paoking, Hunan, China.

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