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H. A. Rhodes.

Quarto Centennial

PAPERS READ BEFORE

The Korea Mission

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

U. S. A.

AT

The Annual Meeting

IN

PYENG YANG,

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REMINISCENCES.

DR. H. G. UNDERWOOD, D.D.

I am beginning to realize that old age brings its honors, when I am asked to give reminiscences, in the presence of this august body; and I appreciate the courage and spirit of self-sacrifice which has enabled your committee to make such a request, and I hope that you are all fully prepared to take the consequences, for it is always dangerous to start a garulous old timer on such a line.

As I look around on this gathering I cannot but feel however that it is fitting that I should receive this appointment, as my memory of things Korean goes back further than that of any of my hearers; but it must be remembered that I am not the "father of the mission," for of the Presbyterian trio who first came to Korea, it was the sainted Dr. J. W. Heron who had the honor of being the first protestant missionary appointed to this field, although the fact that Dr. Allen was in Shanghai, made it so that he, the last appointed, was the first to arrive.

Interesting perhaps, but certainly profitless discussions as to these firsts are sometimes carried on, but these distinctions are so minute that even now, they are almost imperceptible. The Rev. H. G. Appenzeller, of the M. E. mission, and I, landed in Korea, on the same day, but he now, with others, whose memories are tenderly cherished by both native christians and fellow workers, of whom we think with mingled envy and sorrow, standing among that cloud of witnesses, looks down upon Korea, we believe, with a clearer vision of the future than any of us, and rejoices with us in the work of Grace already accomplished here.

But even for us who remain, as we view this land to-day, and see all that God has done, the first overwhelming and inspiring thought is, that all this has come to pass during a part of the life time of a comparatively young man, and little though the share he has had in the real work may be, he thanks God that he has been permitted to be a witness of the marvellous miracle now in progress of the birth of a nation.

In all our reminiscences, we can but compare as it were, yesterday with to-day, and are compelled to stand in awe as we watch what He is doing, and with bated breath to exclaim "what hath God wrought."

In the winter of '82-'83. the Rev. Dr. Altmans, now of the Meiji Gakuin of Tokyo, but then a student, gathered the volunteers at New Brunswick together, and read them a paper he had been appointed to prepare on the Hermit Kingdom at last opened by treaty to the Western World. The simple story of these twelve or thirteen million without the Gospel ; of the church praying for an open door ; the door, opened, thro Admiral Shufelt's treaty in 1882 and the thought of a year and more having passed without a move on the part of the church, so stirred the speaker, that he determined to set to work, and find some one to go.

For myself, I believed I had been called to India, and in this conviction had made certain special preparations for that field, and had spent a year in medical study ; but I certainly felt there must be others who would be ready to go ; yet do what I would, urge as I might, a year passed, and still no one had offered, no church seemed ready to enter, and even the leaders in the foreign mission work of the churches were writing articles urging that it was too early to enter Korea. It was *then* that the message came home to me. "Why not go yourself?" But India, her needs, the peculiar call I believed I had had to that field, the partial special preparations, all loomed up, and seemed to bar the way.

Every door seemed closed and at first it appeared impossible to open them. Twice I applied to my own church but lack of

funds compelled them to decline. Twice I had applied to the Presbyterian Board only to be told it was useless. The door seemed closing on Korea and wide open to stay at home or to follow my first intention to go to India. I had about decided upon this course and had written with much reluctance my acceptance of a call to a New York church; had sealed this letter and was about to drop it in the letter-box when it seemed almost as though I heard a voice saying "No one for Korea," "How about Korea?" I drew back the letter in my hand determined to make another effort Koreaward and turned my face once again toward 23 Center Street (the old Presbyterian Board rooms). This time the secretary that I had previously seen was out and I saw a new face, that of Dr. F. F. Ellinwood, who assured me of his interest and in a few days I was notified that at the next meeting of the Board I should be appointed.

Just prior to my appointment, a somewhat lengthy discussion had been in progress, as to opening Korea, some of our secretaries being ardently in favor of it, others believing they must wait some years. It was just at this time, that the senior secretary of the American Board published a lengthy article urging delay in entering this country.

Mr. D. W. McWilliams, a christian layman and a member of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, reading the article took it to Dr. Ellinwood and enquired whether he felt able to answer it. The doctor agreed, and at luncheon soon showed to the satisfaction of Mr. McWilliams that Korea should be entered at once but he acknowledged that his colleagues and the Board did not not agree with him.

Mr. McWilliams then enquired as to the cost of their opening a new mission and then drew his check for \$6,000.00 to be used for opening a mission to Korea if that mission were begun at once.

I cannot proceed, without just stopping a moment to recall, that in the work of the last year and a half in America, in behalf of Korea, we have had both in the Board, and in the church, the

warm and hearty sympathy and co-operation of this devoted christian brother. His was one of the last faces that I saw as with deep regret that he could not come out at this time, he sent his fatherly and saintly benedictions to the missionaries here.

It was almost immediately after my appointment, that I met for the first time Dr. Heron, and together we talked with the Board over our plans for Korea.

The only steamship available for the port of Chemulpo was the old Tserio Maru, a sailing vessel converted into a S. S. of a few hundred tons burden.

Chemulpo at that time consisted of a very few Chinese and Japanese newly erected huts, and here we put up, at either Daibutsu or Harry's hotel, both *called* first class. Daibutsu's beds consisted of a blanket, laid over plain boards in a bedstead, and at Harry's one had to tip the one only basin to prevent the water running out of a hole on the other side. We had been directed to put ourselves in care of Mr. Cooper, who would secure ponies and start us on our way. I wish I had time to picture to you old Mr. Cooper, who came to our hotel and told us that he would make all arrangements and particularly warned us that we must be sure and leave not a minute later than eight, because otherwise we should risk being locked out at the closing of the city gates. Dr. Allen had already been settled some six months in Seoul and had passed thro the experiences in connection with the emeute of 1884 and had been appointed physician to the emperor as well as to several of the legations then resident in Korea.

The attitude of government and people being unknown, it was at that time deemed best, that our presence and intended work, should not be too widely advertised. A great deal of timidity was felt in all foreign circles, especially the diplomatic as to what Koreans might do, and the sudden uprising of the previous December, had so added to this feeling, that it was deemed absolutely necessary that any foreigner in the capital

should have a good horse, and be prepared to seek refuge at the post on short notice.

The opening of the Royal Hospital, coming at about this time, I was at once pressed into the service, acting as dispenser at the clinics.

You all know the story of the first baptized christian, and it is needless for me to repeat how he was led to believe, but I doubt whether any one can realize just what it means to him and to us. The massacres of the Roman Catholics still fresh in the minds of both natives and foreigners, the law condemning christians to death had never been repealed, and only a year before Dr. Allen's arrival, a Chinese soldier, a christian from Chefoo had been arrested for daring to sell Chinese scriptures in Seoul, and the Korean government had demanded though unsuccessful his punishment by death.

How far the existing powers were desirous of holding to the old law, and to what extent this reflected the real feelings of the people, we were then unable to decide, but the Korean despite his doubts on this score, asked baptism, and of course we acceded to his request.

But for more than for these considerations of caution was this an important occasion to us. As we looked on this man, the first fruit of our work and prayers, our faith was strengthened, our zeal quickened, and we seemed to see a vision of those others behind him who would follow. And yet our brightest dreams fell far short of the riches of the glory of the inheritance that was to be, "for the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind." We could not then hear the tramp of the army of thousands which follows the cross here to-day; nor the music that should roll upward from hundreds of little churches, before 25 years had passed, but we knew that day had begun to dawn in dark Korea, and felt assured that that one believer was God's pledge to us of a people whom he would make His own.

It was during this same year 1886, that we were first visited

by a cholera epidemic. The record of the funerals which passed out of the two gates of Seoul through which they were allowed to go, showed a death rate of a little over a thousand a day. Every missionary's house was provided with cholera medicine and we all did what we could to stay the progress of the plague.

Of course in the earlier days the learning of the language, the study of the people, the preparation of language helps, and the first beginnings of Bible translation, engaged our efforts, but even from the start, we were watching opportunities to tell the gospel story, and praying for open doors. Constantly word was coming to us from the north of the results of Mr. Ross's work, among Koreans across the Chinese border, and especially of the opening which seemed to exist in the village of Sorai. A delegation from here had visited us in Seoul, and it was decided by the missionaries that the place must be visited and as far as opportunity offered work begun at suitable points along the route. What we lacked in native books in Unmon, we tried to make up by the use of Chinese tracts and scriptures, and starting out with two ponies, we made our first itinerating trip.

It was with on little fear and trepidation, we started on this journey. We had from the beginning been rather surprised at the kindness of the "wild and blood-thirsty Koreans" of whom we had heard so much. We had believed that natives were strongly hostile to foreigners, and especially to Christianity, and we ascribed the warm reception accorded us by the residents of Seoul, and vicinity to the favor of the palace, and their having learned to know us in the hospital, and our homes. It would be very different we were told in the interior. I have not time to go into details, but let me briefly refer to the incident heard by some of you already, of the time when I was lost in the woods north of Hai Ju on this very trip. We did not yet know the people, certainly those in the interior and they knew nothing about us. And while I cannot but laugh over the affair, it seemed to me then no smiling matter, as astride my

pony, I peered from the shelter of the woods, and wondered whether I dared ask the way. I knew not in which direction to turn, I was certainly on the wrong road for I should have overtaken the packs by twelve and it was now two, and when I viewed that village with its central tiled house, and surrounding huts, I had a bad attack of decidedly cold feet as I thought that I must go and make inquiries of these unknown and hostile barbarians. Visions of Lieutenant Foulk, a former attaché of the American legation, who knew the road fleeing for life from an excited crowd, and only escaping because the river ice was sufficiently strong only for one, broke through with the many, presented itself only too vividly to my mental vision, but I neither knew the road, nor was there a convenient ice trap.

Imagine then my (—shall I call it disappointment?) as the kind and gentlemanly farmer, who responded to my call, accorded to me the sort of reception that I have since found universally given in Korea, to civil advances and requests for aid from strangers. He overwhelmed me with generous and insistent proffers of hospitality, urging that I must refresh myself and horse before going further, and would hardly let me go without the acceptance of at least a little tobacco.

Having arrived at Sorai, the whole village seemed eager to do me honor : christians and heather vied with each other in trying to provide delicacies they fancied I should enjoy ; and here to my delight, I found a half dozen more men who were willing to call themselves christians, with a still larger band of enquirers. But as here, again alone, I entered the little village it was Mr. Saw Kyung Jo, now pastor, who rushed up and grasping my hand in both of his, welcomed me to the place. Ever since I have felt that Sorai is a little piece of home, and the most significant fact in connection with this village was, that I heard people saying that tho they knew little about his teachings, his doings were very good.

In the intervals of all sorts of beginnings, Mr. Appenzeller and I had undertaken the translation of the Gospel of Luké, and

the National Bible Society of Scotland printed it in 1887, it was of course very imperfect, but we felt the need of the gospel for the women, and common people and gave them the best we could then prepare. The following Spring, Mr. Appenzeller and I started on a union itinerating evangelistic trip, and were ignominiously recalled to our great disgust and high indignation, when we had gone no further than Pyeng Yang—the first place where they could reach us—on account of a sudden panic into which all the foreigners had been thrown by an anti-christian decree, fulminated really against the Roman Catholics in a sudden fit of official indignation over the building of the cathedral on a forbidden site. Loud and many were the reproaches with which we were greeted on all sides on our return, as having by our rash action in going to the country been the cause of this sudden blow to the work. But that our trip, or preaching had nothing whatever to do with this, we soon learned, not only when the real cause came out, but one much more convincing in the fact, that hardly had I returned, when I was visited by three members of the cabinet and offered the entire charge of the government educational work, and to cap the climax, when I refused even to consider this unless permitted to teach christianity in connection with it, this liberty was freely granted.

This prohibitory edict was interpreted by our minister as meaning that we were forbidden to hold services of any kind in our schools or homes, or to pray or sing with natives. We were told that we might teach the historical Christ but nothing more. Under those strictures some of the missionaries were led for a time to suspend all active work, but this was only for a short time, and the few who thought and acted differently were considered a party of dangerous fanatics who would undoubtedly bring down swift destruction on the heads of all the foreigners, until a Methodist Bishop, and a Presbyterian Secretary of the Board, after long and troubled interviews with diplomats and missionaries took their stand on the same side, and it was found

that the christians who shouted their hymns with all their usual husty vigor went quite unnoticed and unharmed, when all work was gradually openly resumed.

In the meantime every form of mission work was beginning, and every form was welcomed as a means of opening doors for direct evangelistic work. Of course it must be remembered that with only one or two workers outside of the medical department this could not be so thoughtly and completely done, as later, when there were more heads and hands, at the same time, so great was the pressure on all sides, so fast were doors opening, and calls with a wonderful appeal coming from near and far that it would have been less than human not to respond, while we needed to be more than human to do all as we desired.

The medical work was making advances by leaps and bounds, winning high favor everywhere. Drs. Allen and Heron were being constantly called to his majesty, while Miss Ellers' services as medical attendant on the queen were in frequent requisition, and brought her in touch with the wives of the nobility. A medical school was started and hospital and school being departments of the government, the doctors and teachers became at once practically Korean officials and thus had the entree to, and good will of this exclusive and powerful class, while at the same time, their ceaseless and untiring efforts for the present at least, coupled with their marvellous and almost miraculous success, did no little to win general favor toward all foreigners. In fact it was almost entirely due to Dr. Heron's intense devotion to his work that he lost his life, for in the extremest heat of a severe summer, when he himself ought to have been under the care of a trained nurse, he insisted upon riding 25 miles to attend a clinic, and on remaining in Seoul instead of returning to the mountains.

Not a little difficulty was experienced in arranging for the sepulture. The government had not yet conformed to treaty stipulations, to set aside a cemetery, and the U. S. minister applying to the government for this, they evaded, postponed, and after

a day or two, proposed first one and then another absolutely impossible site. When the U. S. minister found himself unable to get any satisfactory response, as it was necessary to do *something* promptly, he consented to the temporary interment on one of the properties of the mission inside the city walls. The very suggestion however of such a thing was almost like putting a match to a powder magazine, riots were threatened, and the abject terror of the government was such, that they at once came to terms, and the present site on the river was agreed upon. It was a sore trial to have this turmoil at a time when all hearts were sad but it fell thus to Dr. Heron even in death to prepare the way, for a peaceful resting place, for his fellow countrymen, who were to follow him one by one.

The nervous condition of unrest has let us on more than one occasion to expect riots and difficulties, sometimes guards have been called to the various legations, and at times the resident foreigners themselves have been organized as guards for their respective legations.

Perhaps the most exciting of all was that known as the "baby riots" when feeling grew more and more intense, and one night with loaded guns at our sides we awaited the signal that should call us to the legations. The alarm came, but fortunately proved a mistake, for it was afterwards found that all the legation guns were unfit for use.

Despite the fact that we have at times seemed to be dwelling on a volcano and that we have seen decided evidence of uneasiness and unrest, such as might easily have resulted in serious disturbances and that even in the few cases where disturbances have existed some of our men have been in positions where life was seriously endangered. God has so overruled that thus far no missionary life has been lost from such a cause.

Perhaps the most trying time which the whole foreign community ever experienced, was during the very severe and unhealthy summer of the China-Japan war, when all foreigners were confined within the city walls. Those from the country

were called to the capital, and there was scarcely a family where there were not one or more cases of severe sickness, while Dr. and Mrs. Vinton, and Mr. and Mrs. Junkin were called each to give up a little one who could not stand the severe conditions.

We older ones all remember with the keenest interest the day when the news reached us of the persecution of christians in Pyeng Yang, and our fears for the lives of Dr. and Mrs. Hall and their children, the hours of united and individual prayer, in their behalf, the apparent refusal of the government or at least of the governor to accede to the demands of the British and American legations, the volunteers who clamored to be allowed to go down to that city and render such assistance as was possible to these brethren in danger, and the prayers and fears with which we followed Messrs. Moffett and McKenzie as they went on this trip into the very lions' den as it seemed, and so likely was it that they might not return, that no married man had been allowed to go.

How God has overruled it all for His glory is plain to us to-day who gather in this same city for our Annual meeting. This was only a few years ago, and yet to-day the christians in this city form the most powerful factor here. The saintly Hall and McKenzie are now gone, and they too with us are rejoicing in the manifestations of the power of the old old story of Jesus and his love.

Mr. McKenzie went from Pyeng Yang to Sorai and there established himself attempting to live as a Korean and by his simple life and personal touch to preach and teach Christ. The work in this section bears the impress of his life to this day. But time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and Sampson and Jephtha, of David also and Samuel and of the prophets who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight turned to flight the armies of the aliens. (Heb. xi : 32-34.)

As we run our eyes over the list of the men and women who have served the kingdom in this land, very many bear stars againsts their names, to mark that they are here no more.

Their work is done. Their course is run, and having received the Master's "well done" they wear their crowns. But we, why are we left? Because our work is not yet done, our task not yet completed, and we are given yet a day of grace in which to finish our poor labors, to correct our mistakes, to love more tenderly and patiently, to endure more cheerfully, to toil more unselfishly and whole-heartedly. For some of us perhaps even now the messenger waits at the door. Let us be up then and doing for the night cometh wherein no man can work.

Quite early in our history the Translation Board and the Bible Executive Society were formed, and the Tract Society came into existence and received generous assistance from the parent societies in America and England. Still later the Y. M. C. A. had its first modest beginnings, when a young man called Gillett, made his appearance in Seoul. Hymn books, lesson leaves and church papers found their way among us one by one, and glad was the day when we met, with the American minister in the choir, to celebrate the publication of the first copies of the tentative edition of the New Testament. Such were indeed red letter days, when we could take breath and feel that a milestone had been reached; a definite and lasting work accomplished.

There were political upheavals many in these days; there was another siege of cholera; there were wars and rumors of wars, but steadily the leaven was working, new ideals were forming, new ambitions and desires; evil customs were changing; the attitude of the whole people toward christianity, education, women, and children was becoming transformed, till to-day we find ourselves out of breath in the effort to keep pace with it, and instead of spurs are needing the check-rein and the curb, for they are going perhaps so fast as to overleap the goal. All but the newest here have seen classes of boys and girls graduating from our schools, you have seen well trained native doctors, receiving

their degrees and beginning the work of christian medical service among their people, we have seen a class of ministers graduating from a theological seminary, and foreign missionaries sent out by a native church to others in darkness ; and now not quite forgetting, for we cannot, the things that are behind let us press forward for the mark, and the prize of our high calling, *All Korea for Christ.*

But we cannot close these reminiscences without noting how one after another, corps after corps of the Lord's army, have wheeled into line, and ranging themselves with the forces on the field have been striving earnestly and unitedly for the one object.

Methodists and Presbyterians came hand in hand, and ever since close shoulder to shoulder, they have gone forward. In a very short time the "Vanguard" of the Canadians arrived on the scene, merging their forces so with these already here, as almost to lose their own identity. Close upon their heels came the first representatives of the Australian Mission of whom first was the sainted Davis, who gave his life for the Korean church. At about the same time came Bishop Corfu with his company of workers to represent that mother of foreign missions, and though perhaps they and we do not see eye to eye in matters of form, and all doctrines, they have been doing a noble work as far as numbers and strength would permit.

Within a year of their arrival the Southern Presbyterian Church decided to enter the field, and with steadily increasing numbers, have endeavored to thoroughly occupy that section of the field allotted to them, and in a peculiar way, especially may it be said of this mission, they have been willing to go wherever they could assist in the general work of the Lord, without regard as to the credit which might or might not accrue to their own individual body. It is barely a year ago since we were called to mourn the loss of one of their pioneers, who has worked hand in hand side by side with us from the first and only the other day another was called.

More recently we welcomed Dr. Reed and Mrs. Campbell as the leaders of the Methodist Church, South, and it has been intensely interesting to note the assiduity with which that mission, in its intense desire to have no overlapping has brought it about that a comparatively small section has been assigned to her, and the states-manlike way in which they are endeavoring to properly equip that section.

Last year we were called upon to welcome the latest arrival, the Salvation Army.

In the gradual drawing together of these forces, in reality all working with one object, in one dear Name, we find that to-day, four of these grand divisions, have formed such an organic union as to be essentially one; two others are in such harmony that they also may almost be thought of as one and all the evangelistic forces in Korea thus far may be considered as in three great sections.

But my brethren is this all? Are we to stop here? Is it not our most solemn duty to study how every impediment may be removed, every obstacle overthrown, and how drawing ever closer and closer, we may conserve the priceless forces of the King, until in fulfilment of his last command and dearest wish, we shall all be one, marching forward to conquer for him.

God grant that since he has so wonderfully manifested His Presence and Power; as we listen to His voice; as we hear His stately steppings, our hearts may be so thrilled that losing sight of all else, we may all, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist, Church of England crowd so close to Jesus that distinctions and divisions between us may be crowded out and that all welded into *one* may accomplish His Purpose.
