Caroline (Carrie) Phebe Tenney-Keith.
Episcopal Church Missionary in Shanghai, China.

Miss Caroline Tenney

Tenney, William C., Memoir of Mrs. Caroline P. Keith,

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Resolved. That the Board hereby expresses its grateful appreciation of the labors of the Rev. Mr. Tenny, in the preparation and publication of the Memoirs of Mrs. C. P. Keith [Miss Tenney] late missionary at Shanghai.

Resolved. That in view of the value of this work, as an efficient auxiliary in promoting a more lively interest in the cause of Foreign Missions, this Board respectfully requests the parochial clergy throughout the Church to aid in securing its general dissemination.¹

¹ Spirit of Missions, Vol 29 No 11-12, November-December 1864, p. 311.
Chapter 1.
Early Life, Move to the South, Episcopalian Membership and Romantic Disappointment.

The 21st century world is so used to rapid communication that it is easy to forget when people handwrote long and detailed letters to friends and family when, as in the mid 19th century world, international letters sometimes took a year between a letter and a reply. Caroline Tenney wrote in 1847 that she had used her “feathered instrument” to write “fifty-five” pages of letters. By February 1851 she had written 88 letters from Shanghai. In 1852 she reported that in the nearly three years she had been in China she had written 325 letters to more than 50 individuals, and had received 200. She wrote to a friend, long before she went to China, that:

It is seldom necessary for me to ask pardon for negligence in writing, because I generally love to write as well as most people love to read letters. Letter writing is to me what daily intercourse with friends is to others—my happiness; and in some cases it has seemed almost necessary to my life, as it has certainly been to my comfort.

She continued her extensive correspondence but her letters from her family to Caroline in China were destroyed when the ship on which her husband, the Rev. Cleveland Keith, was journeying to New York after her death in San Francisco, was destroyed by fire and all their property lost. Mr. Keith also died as a consequence of the loss of the ship, “Golden Gate.”

In a century when Christian idealism was confronting social evils at home it is interesting that people, like Caroline Tenney, chose to leave comfortable lives for the vagaries of living among strangers who mostly ignored them. There is a prior question

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlestown_Female_Seminary; 

3 Caroline Tenney (hereafter TC) to Miss Mary E. Plumer, 15 February 1861, Tenney op cit, p. 117. Miss Plumer was a school-friend, apparently at Adams Female Seminary in Derry.


5 CT to Mrs Wm. T. Cutter, (a cousin) 21 August 1844. Tenney op cit. p.21.

about why people became missionaries at all that merits more than a simple recognition of religious idealism.

Missionary candidates were not moved to their choice of a vocation wholly by religious motives. The young men and women who volunteered were seldom religious aesthetes, although the spiritual drive was central in their lives. They reflected the normal excitement over an unusual career in an unusual corner of the world, free from the more prosaic patterns . . . at home.7

There is a further question about the motivations of unmarried women who chose to become missionaries in the 19th century and all the more so because far and away the majority came from comfortable middle class homes. By the 1890s, single women missionaries outnumbered men in China by roughly two to one.

In the 19th century, English-speaking society believed that the primary and proper role for women was marriage and family or engaging in people related jobs such as teaching or nursing in patterns still familiar today. Bishop William Jones Boone, leader of the Episcopal Mission and the first bishop of the Anglican tradition in China, gave this exposition of his understanding of the subsidiary and dependent role of women missionaries.

It seems we can get some aid from the female sex, though entirely deserted by the male. Let us thank God for this, and use the instrumentality we can get. It may have a deeper meaning than we are aware of. Our school, so far, has been more blessed with conversions than any that has been conducted in China. I ascribe it, under God, to the maternal care of the ladies, who have so indefatigably served them in sickness and in health. This is the talent the Lord has given to women—to win the hearts of the young by their kindness and sympathy. They can do here what man cannot do. Among girls they have a field peculiarly their own.8

In another letter, Bishop Boone wrote:

It is a great mercy that we can get self-denying women to come out and join the Mission: and I assure you that these excellent ladies are doing a good work, a most important work, for the spread of the Gospel here in China. Youths who, in God's providence, are to have much influence on their own generation, are receiving an education at our hands. A remarkable success, as far as regards moral results, has been vouchsafed to us;—this success I ascribe, under God, mainly to the excellent influence of the ladies who have had charge of the boys. If all that was to be cultivated here was the head, the work, great as this work would be, (for the intellect is asleep here,) might be left to men. But the heart, the affections of the poor heathen, are still more in need of cultivation; and for this work God has endowed women with eminent qualifications. Let them rejoice to come to this

8 Spirit of Missions, Vol 16 No 8, August 1851, p. 334.
great field, where their services are so much needed.\(^9\)

Caroline Tenney wrote a revealing remark to her sister-in-law that: “I wish I had been a man, or else a meek, quiet woman. This dependence is so galling.”\(^{10}\) And a few months later confirmed that statement to her brother.

I pity intensely any woman, now or in past ages, in private or in public station, of masculine mind. Could I choose my own character, and enter again upon life, I would beg to be saved from anything but mere passable sense and the most superlative amiability… Indeed, the greatest trial of my life has been to content myself with the sphere of woman.\(^{11}\)

In an article published elsewhere, the deep but unrequited affection of intellectually gifted Lydia Mary Fay for the Rev. Charles Dana was discussed.\(^{12}\) Caroline Tenney also experienced romantic disappointment and both women sought, eventually, to find fulfillment in foreign missionary work.

Caroline’s parents were of New England Puritan background, their Yorkshire ancestors arriving in America in 1639. Mr. Tenney was a small-town lawyer of indifferent health who apparently suffered depression throughout his life perhaps stimulated by a lack of professional recognition and advancement. The family was comfortable but not wealthy and their town, centred on cotton manufacture, was dominated by what her brother described as less than desirable values. The family were regular attenders at the local Congregational Church although neither of the parents were communicant members. In reaction to what he saw as religious excesses around him, Mr. Tenney became a Unitarian although Mrs. Tenney remained “a moderate Trainitarian Congregationalist to the last.”\(^{13}\)

The children were initially educated at home; her older brother William then studied at Phillips’ Exeter Academy and Harvard University. Caroline, at 16 years, enrolled at Adams Female Seminary in Derry, a seminary her brother, her biographer, said was “for young ladies, probably not excelled, if, indeed, equaled, by any other in the State.” He added: “Very few young women of her age, even of families in far easier circumstances

\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^{10}\) CT to Mrs. William Tenney 23 December 1848. Tenney op cit, p 62.
\(^{11}\) CT to William Tenney, 2 April 1849. Tenney op cit, p 63.
\(^{13}\) Tenney 1864, p 5.
than ours, began the world with better mental furnishing than she."\[^{14}\]

Her brother summed up their early life:

A small family circle, removed by distance from frequent intercourse with kindred; with uncongenial surroundings; with occasional though not violent fluctuations in worldly prospects, intensifying, however, the anxieties consequent on the slender health of the household's head; a father with an invalid's varying mood; a mother with unyielding hope and resolve; an only son with a boy's bright visions of the future; an only daughter, with but casual associates and no intimates, craving not only the substance but the tokens of affection (the manifestations of which our parents, genuine New England people, rather repressed than indulged), with few recreations or amusements, thirsting for knowledge, with quick sensibilities, with warm affections, with tender and thoughtful religious musings, with the dreams, hopes, and forming resolves of an ardent and aspiring girlhood—these, some of the features of the youth as it was.\[^{15}\]

It appears that her temper was always ready to flare and she was impatient and rebellious.\[^{16}\] She said of herself:

My greatest fear is, that my quick, sensitive, impatient temper will never be perfectly controlled; that I shall never be the gentle, forbearing one I ought. Not that it troubles me now—for there is nought to disturb it here; but it may awake from its sleep, when occasion stirs it up and I am unmindful. It has done so, when I believed it to be under my control.\[^{17}\]

In December 1839, after the death of her parents, Caroline, now, like her brother, a Unitarian, attended a Baptist seminary in Charlestown, Mass, where she studied French, Drawing, Music (practicing three hours each day), Chemistry, Astronomy (Geography of the Heavens), and wrote a weekly composition.\[^{18}\] The two children had received a modest inheritance from their father.\[^{19}\]

After graduating from the seminary as a teacher Caroline, twenty years old, became a governess on a rice plantation at Wilton Bluff\[^{20}\], a property about forty miles from Charleston, South Carolina where her brother was then living.\[^{21}\] It was there that she first attended an Episcopal Church\[^{22}\] and found its formality very different from what

\[^{14}\] Ibid, p 3.
\[^{15}\] Ibid, pp 6-7.
\[^{16}\] Ibid, p 5.
\[^{17}\] CT to William Tenney, 5 February 1842, In Tenney op cit, p.15.
\[^{18}\] CT to Miss Mary E. Plumer, 3 September 1840, Tenney op cit, p. 12.
\[^{19}\] The plantation is also known as Willtown Bluff and dates from 1714. It was owned by Lewis Morris V. The Morris family attended a local Episcopal Church. See Zierden, Martha et al, *Willtown, An Archaeological and Historical Perspective*, (Charleston, Charleston Museum, 1999).
\[^{20}\] She was recommended by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Gilman, minister of the Unitarian Church in Charleston that it seems her brother was attending.
\[^{21}\] St. Philip’s Episcopal Church, Charleston, the first Anglican Church in South Carolina, established 1680. CT to William Tenney, 28 May 1842. Tenney op cit, p. 16.
she had been accustomed to in New England. She wrote to her brother:

Unitarianism has not promoted my growth in grace—it has played about the head; and, although it is a lovely system as held by such men as Henry Ware, yet, with the great body, it is a nominal faith. I do enjoy the Episcopal service much. In the first place, it is worship, as a great proportion of all services in church ought to be; it is rational and beautiful; the preaching is profitable, and I feel a delight in going to the house of God that I have not felt for many a day. I should miss the service much... Though I am still undecided as to doctrines, I now enjoy more of the peace in believing than I have for two years. Yes, I have been "tempest-tost." In future, however much doctrines may trouble me, I will not let go the assurance I feel that God will not cast off a sincere worshipper.22

In the isolation of Wilton Bluff Caroline spent her spare time reading widely in Episcopal and other religious books remarking to a friend that: "Could I have chosen a situation, perhaps there is not one in the United States more suited to my feelings and qualifications than this."23

After leaving Wilton’s Bluff in November 1842 she spent 1843 with her brother in New York. She was increasingly drawn to liturgical worship—experiencing a “heart-warming” through ordered worship but she found worship in various churches in New York to be too speculative and too inclined to talk rather than active Christian service. She continued to search for a deeper spiritual experience and was increasingly dismissive of Unitarianism for its fine intellectuality that was seriously weakened, in her assessment, by the absence of any significant effect in the life of listeners.24

In early 1844 Caroline moved to Virginia to take charge of another family of six children and three of their neighbours at a place just five miles from Charleston and sixteen miles from Harper’s Ferry. Churchgoing was difficult because of what she described as intolerable Virginian roads. She found Southern culture a difficult environment. She wrote to a former Congregational pastor, the Rev. Constantine Blodgett who was to exercise a significant influence on her life:

I am now teaching in a family in this county, having about ten pupils. My stay here is uncertain, the solitudes of the South not possessing sufficient charms to keep me long among them; nor are the "peculiar institutions " [i.e. slavery] and restraints of Southern life agreeable to a lover of New England.25

22 CT to William Tenney, 4 January 1842, Tenney op cit, p.15.
23 CT to Mary Plumer, 9 April 1842. Tenney op cit, p. 16.
24 Some idea of the religious climate around Caroline Tenney during her time in New York will be found in a paper about William Henry Channing, founder of the Christian Union Church. See online 1 September 2012 at — http://transcendentalism.tamu.edu/authors/whchanning.html
After five months in Virginia she told a friend that:

When in Carolina, I had, by various means, good access to books; but not so here... Month after month to see no one, to go nowhere, to have no books, to be deprived of church (for I have heard but four sermons since I came)—do you not think I shall relish a visit to the North? There is but one family here that I have visited, and they have been here once. I never ride out, and the walks are not safe. More and more thankful am I that I was born in the North. Women here are completely fettered by the power of custom and by the opinion of "the world." Unable to move without a "protector," and not always having one at command. Protector! I always blush to use the word; it makes me feel the yoke that woman bears. If, at the North, men have less "gallantry," they have, I hope, more genuine respect for the character of woman as an intellectual being, formed not merely to please, but to have an independent existence; and if woman has less "grace" and "sweetness," she certainly has more character and energy... Woman cannot act, breathe so freely here as in the North." And the curse of slavery! ... You are told the South wish to abolish slavery; but bring the question home, you see they shrink from really dispensing with their menials, though they do dread the future and its consequences.26

She disliked the local gentry among whom she worked as a governess and their devotion to “all the forms of ease and dissipation.” She remarked that:

My time here, no doubt, will pass monotonously away; one day, in all outward things, being the history of the preceding. As the roads in this country are very rough in the winter, I expect to go very little even to church, and to see few people. Indeed, the few whom I do see are not the sort to please me; and one does not care to meet indifferent people a few times, because one cannot find out what is really worthy, and has to endure the tiresome constraint.27

Caroline experienced a deeply personal conversion in the latter part of 1844, telling her former school friend from Derry, Mary Plumer, that she now had peace of mind and was now in a safe harbor.28 She wrote to the Rev. Constantine Blodgett that:

Of one thing I am certain: the Bible is full of Christ; and Unitarianism, as I have heard it, can get along without much mention of Him whose name, to those who believe, is precious.29

In later years she wrote to her Unitarian minister brother, William, of her classical evangelical outlook:

The holy peace, the joyous hope, the patient endurance, the deep sense of sin, the sense of God ever present, the humble yet firm confidence, the sweet submission, the entire devotedness, the ardent aspirations for holiness, the adoring views of God’s character and government, the conscious and living union with Christ.30

28 CT to Mary Plumer, 28 October 1844. Tenney op cit, p. 24.
29 CT to Rev. Constantine Blodgett, 11 January 1845. Tenney op cit, p. 28.
30 CT to William C. Tenney, 21 July 1848, Tenney op cit, p. 74. She affirmed her belief in Wesleyan sanctification. CT to William C. Tenney, Shanghai, 8 February 1851, Tenney op cit, p. 117.
William’s view of New England revivalists i.e., evangelicals, was, like his father’s years earlier, dismissive of the excessive enthusiasm of evangelical revivalism:

Illiterate, ranting exhorters, filled with hatred to the "standing order," as the Congregational body was called, and lashing themselves and their hearers up to profitless, or worse than profitless spasms of periodical excitement.31

Caroline’s views on slavery, although she did not actively debate the issue, were hardened by the ill-treatment of New Englanders who came to argue against slavery. She told her employer that the more she saw of slavery, the more she detested it.32 In July 1845 she returned to Massachusetts, determined never to return to the South. Her brother recorded that her last few months in Virginia saw a decline in her physical health—the onset of “dyspepsia” or perhaps ‘irritable bowel syndrome.” Whatever the exact complaint, it was to remain a permanent condition that became more severe with age and life in Shanghai.

An old friend, a Miss Willard, had opened a school in Louisville, Kentucky, with 50 pupils. The Episcopal minister was another old friend, a former New Yorker, the Rev. John B. Gallagher, whose ministry she had valued at Christ Church, Wilton Bluff.33 Caroline was to spend two happy years in Louisville. She attended two services each Sunday and taught in two Sunday schools, one for African-American children. During the week she attended another church service with a teachers’ meeting on another night and other visits on one or two evenings. She found the culture of Kentucky very agreeable, more so than in the South or even New York. Unfortunately, the school failed and within three months she was unemployed but determined to stay in Louisville for at least two years more. She opened her own school on the 16th of March 1846, enrolling girls aged between twelve and fourteen years and small brothers from the same families. Within a couple of weeks she had sixteen pupils with more enrolling each day. She was now a regular worshipper in the Episcopal Church and active in local mission work.34 She finally made the decision to become an Episcopal church member and outlined her decision in a long letter to her old school friend, Mary Plumer. She said that she had always been a believer in “Christ crucified” when the family attended the Congregational Church and although she had been a Unitarian, she never had a real

31 Tenney 1864, p 4.
32 CT to William Tenney, 11 February 1845. Tenney op cit, p. 29.
33 CT to Mary Plumer, 23 September 1845. Tenney op cit, pp 31-33.
commitment to Unitarian values. She had found comfort in the Episcopal Church in the South and had now decided that she preferred that church and its beliefs and practices above others.35

Mr. Gallagher had won my respect and affection when I listened to his preaching in South Carolina; he had fed me when I was almost starving for the food of the word.36 Since then my way had been providentially directed to the Episcopal Church, till I had become attached to its beautiful and refreshing service. You will not wonder, then, that I attended here on the ministry of Mr. Gallagher. With him I have had many conversations, and a patient and faithful pastor has he been to me. Becoming convinced that episcopacy is the "primitive order," and of Divine institution, and most warmly attached to the service and ritual of that church, on last Easter I joined the church, and on Whitsuntide (commemorative of the descent of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and coming on the fiftieth day after Easter—[i.e. May 31]for they are to the Christian what the Passover and Pentecost were to the ancient church) I was confirmed by the laying on of the hands of the bishop.37

Early in 1847 Caroline became engaged to a medical student who lived in the same boarding house. In May 1847, aware that the engagement was at an end, she returned to New England, where she stayed with her brother and his family until the end of the year. Determined to earn her own living rather than depend on the kindness of others, she moved, surprisingly given her opposition to slavery and her overall dislike of the southern lifestyle, to work as a governess at Oaken Brow tobacco plantation at Port Conway, Virginia, a place she said, echoing the judgement of Mary Fay on Virginian society, was "the most devoted to self in all the forms of ease and dissipation."38

From there, just over a year after leaving Kentucky, she wrote to her Louisville friend, Mrs. Abbie Sumner, to describe the termination of her engagement to marry.

Since to you was known the commencement, so would I have you know from me, rather than from rumor, the close of the deepest tragedy in my history hitherto. My lover has told me "to seek happiness elsewhere than from him!" The subject is painful; but I wish you to know his course, and as briefly as possible I will narrate the story that has for its subject my disappointment and sorrow. Immediately on his return home, though his thoughts had more liberty to turn to me, his letters fell fifty degrees in temperature. The words, the form were there, but the spirit had fled. He spoke of his friends' feelings on the

35 CT to Mary Plumer, 13 May 1846. Tenney op cit, pp 38-40.
36 The Rev. John B. Gallagher served briefly as Assistant Minister of St. John’s Episcopal Church, Savannah, before moving to Kentucky.
38 CT to William Tenney, 31 August 1848. Tenney op cit, p. 55.
subject, and their reasons—namely, my being a "Yankee," "not rich," my age and consequent fixed habits in connection with my training in a Free State, and my known disapproval of slavery, my superior education, and my religious preferences and opinions!! I saw the cloud in my horizon "no bigger than a man's hand," and I became gloomy as when I wrote you last! But I scrupulously kept the knowledge of it from him I would sometimes rewrite a letter three times in order to make it perfectly free from anything like sadness. May 15th he sat down deliberately, and stated the "reasons which forbade the consummation of our engagement." You shall hear them. First, "my superior mind and its unusual cultivation, together with my age, would make me much more than his equal." Second, our temperaments never would chord, for his love would ever seem to me careless and in different." In proof of this, he quoted those old misunderstandings that had long ago been mutually forgiven. Yet, three times since our reconciliation he has left me to suffer agony from his confessed—mark, I say confessed—habit of procrastination. I never complained. Admonished by the past, I schooled my heart to suffer in silence, but I felt it a dark omen for the future; for if a man can procrastinate in writing to his betrothed, in what will be he punctual? Third, the fact that "he had been raised by slaveholding parents, and held notions abhorrent to mine!" Take notice: last winter he requested me to write something on the subject of slavery, and let him have it published in the Examiner. In my reply, speaking of the "evil," I ventured to call it a "sin." He took fire as though I had slandered his parents. I suffered what, I tell you, I would not suffer again for the love of the very best man that ever trod the earth. I made an idol; I resolved that that [i.e., slavery]should be to me, thenceforth, an untouched, forbidden theme for his sake. I wrote him a gentle reply, expressing my regret. Then it was his turn to repent, having thus harshly turned upon me. What is slavery but a sin? for every evil is a sin, or the result of sin. You have now all his reasons as laid before me; and, lest you should think my own indiscretions have brought this upon myself, I will quote other expressions from his letter. He began by saying he "took the side of reason against hopes which had shed the only light upon an existence dark in its boyhood, but dimly lighted in its early manhood, and that was now about to enter a double gloom for the rest of his life." He says his admiration and esteem for me have never grown less, while his love has increased; that he still and ever places me higher and higher as a moral and intellectual being; that, having known me, he can conceive of perfection in no other; and he has no expectation that time will extinguish his affection. But while he is so imperfect, he can never be competent, consequently never willing to receive my hand! He continues: "I know that I am loved more truly, more sacredly, than it is the lot of many to receive; for but few have your capacity to love. I know that you will make one (worthy of you) more than happy;" and then, with a brief wish for my happiness, without one lingering word to the sweet memories of our pleasant hours, our united hopes, he bids me adieu...I wrote him such a reply as I could. His answer came—one page! In that, he again called me his "dearest friend," but said "he knew not what to write, for he had proved himself defaulter in every principle that constitutes a man; sleeping and waking, he saw the frowns of all that was sacred and dear; he was completely changed in every respect; more abandoned in his hopes than ever; not a particle of confidence in himself in anything, and asking the curses justice demanded."39

Her disappointment was unlikely to have eased when she was later told, by a friend from Louisville, that her former friend had courted no less than half a dozen girls and was now flirting with another, all thoughts of Caroline apparently long forgotten.40

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39 CT to Mrs. Abbie M. Sumner, Louisville KY, 15 July 1848, Tenney, op cit, pp 50-52.
40 CT to Mary Plumer 10 April 1849. Tenney op cit, p.64.
Caroline struggled for emotional equilibrium among “the various rocks and quick sands upon which I had well nigh made shipwreck.”

Her life at Oaken Brow was quiet, or more precisely, dull and provided a chance for her to reappraise her future and to reflect on the inconstancy of men and in specific terms, the her former fiancee’s “duplicit and unworthiness.” Now nearly thirty years old, she concluded, in a moment of despondent romanticism, that “life’s fevered years for me are gone, never to return” and wrote some years later that she decided to go to China believing that she would never marry. It is clear that she had retained all of her feisty character from childhood and continued to be enraged by her fiancee’s rejection. She was emotionally strengthened by her education—that had given her a “masculine” mind— and, with a small private income Caroline, like Mary Morse, another single Episcopal missionary in China, was free of the financial dependency of many less fortunate women of the time. She told her sister-in-law, rather patronisingly, of the problems of another teacher nearby whose poverty made her dependent entirely on the goodwill of others. Her own life, she told her brother, was full of dark and hopeless melancholy but she clung to the belief that God had given her talents for a higher work. Her brother observed that she tended, from childhood, to be judgemental towards others and it was probably a reflection of that trait in her character that she found expression for her unhappiness in ever-stronger denunciations of slavery, making a point of her contempt for all “toadyish Yankees,” who supported the institution.

It is not surprising that Caroline Tenney, like Mary Fay and many other single Christian women with strong intellectual gifts who were denied conventional life fulfillment at home, sought to broaden her horizons. One commentator on the missionary movement observed that:

Missionary candidates were not moved to their choice of a vocation wholly by religious motives. The young men and women who volunteered were seldom religious aesthetes, although the spiritual drive was central in their lives. They reflected the normal

41 CT to Mrs. Sumner, 6 November 1848. Tenney op cit, p. 57.
42 CT to Mary Plumer, 2 July 1848. Tenney op cit, p. 49.
43 CT to Mary Plumer, 10 April 1849. Tenney op cit, p 64.
44 CT to William Tenney, 21 July 1848. Tenney op cit, pp 52-54.
45 CT to Mrs. Sumner, 23 December 1854. Tenney op cit, p 226.
47 CT to William Tenney, 13 May 1848. Tenney op cit, p. 48.
48 CT to Mary Plumer, 2 July 1848. CT to William Tenney, 21 July 1848.. CT to William Tenney, 31 August 1848. Tenney op cit, pp 49-55.
excitement over an unusual career in an unusual corner of the world, free from the more prosaic patterns . . . at home. 

Chapter 2.
An Episcopal Missionary to China.

By October of 1849 Caroline was back in New York having left Virginia in September. She was teaching the Cutter children (nieces and nephews) and had for several months been thinking very seriously about becoming a “missionary to the heathen” in order to escape from “hours of anguish” and to fully use her “peculiar training” i.e., as a teacher. She later said that she had first started thinking about missionary service since 1845, long before she went to Kentucky and the tragic romance.

Her decision to be a missionary did not meet with the approval of her former schoolmate and close friend, Mary Plumer, who was very critical of missionaries—a common position among upper middle class families in the 19th century and a partial explanation for the general lack of financial support for missions from church members as a whole. Caroline explained that her decision had not been made “unconcernedly” for the feelings of others but arose, not just for spiritual reasons but because of:

Many years of hope deferred, of dreary loneliness, had I known; and, when life's fondest dream was dispelled, I awoke to a new world. I felt that life was all changed to me. … I have lain awake whole nights to think of it; and the thought often came like a weight of lead upon my heart, so that I would feel weak, or as one falling from a precipice to a bottomless abyss.

Mary Plumer did not ease up in her criticism of Caroline’s decision to be a missionary. Caroline answered.

Your letter contains several general statements as to missionaries and their work, which, of course, I can only reply to briefly and in general—namely, "cheating," "laziness," "luxury," "uselessness," and "worse than useless." … I have no doubt that there have been and are mercenary missionaries, even as there are everywhere false professors and hypocritical pretenders to goodness.

Caroline was a regular reader of the Episcopal journal Spirit of Missions and a call,
a year earlier, for two female teachers for the Episcopal Mission in Shanghai, lingered in her mind.

Once, when I heard of friends who enjoyed the love of parents or husband, who were surrounded by luxuries and agreeable society, I felt discontented, and thought my lot a hard one. Now I can truly say, as I have heard such things, I have felt an emotion of gratitude and pleasure even, that God had spared me the dangers and responsibilities of such a position. I no longer hunger and thirst for what I once thought necessary to my happiness.56

It is obvious that her romantic disappointment remained uppermost in her mind and was perhaps the major reason why she was making a commitment to foreign missionary service—to leave an unhappy past thoroughly behind her.

Bishop Boone formed a very sound appraisal of the “romantic” view of people who took up foreign missionary work. He summed up his views on the failure of some missionaries, bearing in mind the problems of the Rev. Richardson Graham and the Rev. Henry Wood, in commenting upon Caroline Tenney shortly after her arrival in Shanghai.

Miss Tenney promises to make an excellent missionary. She has found her interest in the work increase upon an experimental knowledge of it. This is all delightful, and as it should be. Woe to the missionary who finds upon experiment that his interest in the heathen was mere romance; that while the ideal creature was one for whom he could live, labour and die, the actual creature he encounters fills him with disgust. When this is the case, the health and spirits are soon gone, and there is no alternative; the party must return home; it is laid to the climate, and others are deterred from coming. In many cases, it is want of adaptation to the work, and not the climate, which is the cause of the missionary's breaking down.57

In October 1849 she visited her old friend and pastor, Rev. Constantine Blodgett, in Pawtucket and was given a letter of introduction to the Rev. Dr. William Lewis, rector of the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Brooklyn Heights—the “most desirable section of Brooklyn.”58 She had already written to the Rev. Mr. Rookers, the new rector of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Louisville, for a resume of her membership of that congregation but had not received a reply.

On 15 November 1849 Caroline Tenney met Dr. Lewis, an enthusiastic supporter of

minister of the Unitarian Church in Lawrence, Kansas where he worked until October 1868.

56 Ibid. p. 78.
57 Spirit of Missions, Vol 16 No 8, August 1851, p. 335
the Episcopal Shanghai mission who arranged for her to meet the Secretary of the Foreign Missions Committee, the Rev. Pierre Irving. She obtained references from several clergymen, including Mr. Blodgett, and her intellectual gifts, relevant experience and the desperate need for a single woman teacher meant that by March 1850 she was an approved missionary supported by the Holy Trinity Church Ladies Benevolent Society but she was, and remained, unknown to most church members. Even when labeled as an “own missionary” by a congregation there was no certainty that the majority of church members took any interest or communicated regularly.

Isolation from home and friends was a common theme in missionary correspondence and for unmarried people with no-one to share the intimacy of daily life, foreign missionary service was a burden made heavier by “the reality of separation from country and friends.” Missionaries frequently did not hear of important family or other events until months later. Caroline was deeply aware of the separation issue:

I felt deeply the separation from the kind friends of my voyage, and of my sojourn in Hong Kong. In these ends of the earth life is peculiarly uncertain; and, unless health should fail, missionaries of different stations, when parting, can indulge Htle or no hope of future interviews; and the pleasure of grateful recollections is saddened by the thought that they shall meet no more on earth.

The average time delay in 19th century China for news from home was rarely less than six months. Caroline Tenney’s “own particular trial since I have become a missionary” was the death of her brother’s wife who was ill when she left the United States. While enroute she wrote to her brother reflecting the anxiety she felt at what she believed would be a permanent separation from her sister-in-law:

There is only one thought that clouds for a moment my serenity. It is the oft-recurring question, "How is my dear Kate at this moment? "Oh! I did not dare utter one word of all I felt in parting from her, such was her delicate state; nor will I do it now, in view of the long interval ere this can reach you, and of the changes that may take place ere then. One thing I have long noticed—how her sweet spirit was ripening for heaven.

59 Ibid p. 25. Tenney op cit, p. 81. One of the three corresponding members of the Ladies Society was Mrs. Oliver Gordon, whose husband was a prominent merchant in the China trade. Brooklyn Daily Eagle, Sunday 11 February 1894, p. 6. The other two were Mrs. Clibborn and Mrs. Nicholson. CT to Mrs. Oliver H. Gordon, Shanghai, 22 December 1850, Tenney op cit, p. 113.

60 CT to Mrs. Oliver H. Gordon, Shanghai, 22 December 1850, p. 111. Caroline subsequently thanked Mrs. Gordon for her regular correspondence remarking that missionaries all took great satisfaction in receiving letters. CT to Mrs. Oliver H. Gordon, Shanghai, 5 May 1851, Tenney op cit, p. 119.

61 CT to Rev. Dr. William H. Lewis, 9 August 1859. Tenney op cit, p. 91.

62 CT to William Tenney, from SS Tartar, Atlantic Ocean, 25 March 1850. Tenney op cit, p. 82.
A month later, still at sea and on the anniversary of her mother’s death and only three weeks before her twenty-ninth birthday, she added:

My thoughts, you will not doubt, my dear brother, often and often turn to you and that dear, patient sufferer, and to the little one. I dared utter scarcely an affectionate word to you or to her while I was with you last, lest I should lose command of myself. Yet I think you could guess my heart; and you will not need that I should say how fondly, how closely that heart's tenderest fibres would clasp around Isabel. Kiss her, and give her Aunty's love, and teach her intelligently to pray for me.63

Her brother’s letter of 2 June, informing her of his wife’s death, reached her four months later.

It is impossible to describe the peculiar distress of such intelligence to one at such a distance. The time that intervenes between the writing and the reception of such letters, has either removed or increased the affliction of the loved friend. Thoughts of sorrow, that we know not of, or, knowing, could not have soothed, torment the imagination.64

Caroline Tenney left New York in March 1850, with five other missionaries of various denominations, and arrived in Hong Kong, on 6 July, via the Indian Ocean and Java, after a journey of 111 days with a subsequent journey from Hong Kong to Shanghai of eight days, arriving there in the evening of Thursday, 1 August. It was a fairly typical experience when reliant upon sailing ships. Caroline told her brother that it was her longest exposure to people who hated religion and confirmed, for her, the Christian doctrine of the total depravity of humankind. Given her views on the hedonistic lifestyle of American Southerners, the ship’s crew must have been a major trial for her. Exposure to a new environment brought her to a deeper spiritual awareness and, she wrote, a new excitement in reading her Bible.65

There can be no doubt that Caroline was feeling separation anxiety. This anxiety is reflected in a letter to a family friend from another of the old-established colonial families of Massachusetts.

My dear "AUNT ALICE: One of my first attempts in letter writing, if I remember rightly, was to that same favorite "Aunt Alice." I am sure it must have been sixteen years ago, after my return from my first visit to Danvers. You would not have predicted then that that overgrown girl would one day have made her way to China as a missionary. Yet such an event has come to pass; and my first letter to Danvers shall be to that same Aunt Alice. And though thousands of miles and the deep ocean now separate us, my Aunt Alice is a hundredfold more dear to me than she was sixteen, or even ten years ago. Every day I think of you all, but most tenderly of that dear "aunt." I have written a long letter to

58 CT to William Tenney, from SS Tartar, 23 April 1850. Tenney op cit, p. 83.
64 CT to Rev. Dr. William Lewis, Shanghai, 19 December 1850, Tenney op cit, p. 109.
65 CT to William Tenney, at sea, 22 May to 10 June 1850. Tenney op cit, pp 84-88.
Almira, which went by ship, and will not reach you before Christmas; also one to Charlotte G. Letters also went to my brother from Hong Kong, July 24th, and again from here to leave Hong Kong August 24th.66

Caroline, always confident about her learning ability, reflected on the challenges facing her in a new situation after a day or two in Shanghai.

It is, then, with deep and serious gladness that I contemplate my work. Upon the particular business of teaching I hope to enter in the course of two weeks. Of course, I allude to the English class; but even in Chinese I shall be able, I am confident, to do some talking in the course of three months. You may be astonished that I should dream of such acquirement; but with a good teacher, and with the assistance of the bishop, which is more valuable than many teachers without his help, and by talking with those who cannot understand English, I must learn much more rapidly than it was possible to do formerly; and I shall be obliged to talk to the servants, who can only understand Chinese. My idea of studying Chinese used to be, that we must sit down and learn four hundred and fifty dry, difficult characters first, and that I must pursue a course of abstract study. But the bishop's experience has taught him better than those old ideas...67

Her first task described above, shared by every other foreign missionary, was to learn Chinese, working with a Chinese teacher for three hours each afternoon, following a contextual method developed by Bishop Boone.

His method is eminently practical. I began Monday, August 5th, to study the Creed, and to repeat it. I shall get it perfectly this week. Next week, the Confession and Lord's Prayer, and so on. This gives me a vocabulary of words, which I can combine very day with others.68

Comments about their language skills are common in missionary archives but should be considered with care when considering the total circumstances of foreigners in China. The Rev. Edward Syle praised her in a letter to the Foreign Committee in New York.

Miss Tenney's case, also, ought to be mentioned, as showing how soon, with the advantages we now possess, one may get into the full career of useful occupation. On the 5th of August, she began taking lessons in Chinese, and on the 31st of January following, (less than six months), she had, to my certain knowledge, read through the whole of St. Matthew's Gospel in the Chinese character, correctly and understandingly. It need hardly be said, that she used good diligence in order to accomplish this; but it ought to be mentioned, that during all this time she was occupied the whole of every morning in teaching English classes. I trust this fact will have its due effect in mitigating the excessive dread of the language, which seems to keep some from joining us.69

66 CT to Mrs. Alice Osborne, 30 August 1850. Tenney op cit, p. 94.
67 CT to Rev. Dr. William Lewis, Shanghai, 9 August 1850. Tenney op cit, p. 92.
68 CT to Rev. William Lewis, Shanghai, 9 August 1850, Tenney op cit, p. 92. Caroline later said that she had memorized 400 characters and would be able to read and write 1000 by the end of the year. CT to Miss Mary Plumer, Shanghai, 15 February 1851, Tenney op cit, p 117.
69 Spirit of Missions, Vol 16 No 8, August 1851, p. 356.
A Chinese Anglican minister in Ningpo made a very frank assessment of the linguistic and cultural abilities of foreign missionaries, noting that it was not only language that confronted them but the permanent challenge of isolation from the values and directions of everyday Chinese.

The missionaries who come from the honourable country [i.e. England] however advanced in learning, and however strong in faith they may be, it is impossible for them when they are but recently come to remove the existing difficulties. Not only are they ignorant of the written character and spoken language, but also are unacquainted with our customs and our characteristics. Hence within the Church hypocrisy is apt to arise, and outside the Church useless books are distributed. From these causes idle rumours arise, slanders are intensified, sincere inquiries are lessened in number. These are difficulties which must lie in the way of given to it, alas owing to he faults of the people generally, these efforts are to a great extent expended in vain.70

Mr. Tzing’s observation about the worth of many of the books and tracts produced and distributed by missionaries might be noted, as the Episcopal mission placed the work of translation and publishing at the centre of its evangelistic model.

Emotional issues remained important for a woman fearing the kind of loneliness that Mary Fay bewailed. A month after her arrival she wrote to her brother saying that she had met a minister, a widower with a little boy, who had proposed marriage. It was apparent that she still carried deep scars from her unhappy romance in Louisville.

As my mind is clear as to certain subjects now, I declined at once. The reasons I gave him were these: that the labor most needed now, at this mission, was that which women, as single, could more successfully discharge; that I had given myself to this object, and could not thus turn aside; that it was not well that persons of widely different views, though only upon two or three points, should be united; and, finally, that I had known enough of earthly loves, and shrank from the fever, the anxieties, and the agonies. The answer he gave, while it heightened my esteem for him, in no wise made me regret my determination.71

She was fully occupied, for three hours each morning, teaching—in English—in the Boys’ School but was looking forward to the opening of a Girls’ School, reflecting the Bishop’s mantra that it was vital to provide suitably educated girls for the students in the Boys’ School.72 This concern for the marriage of the boys is a reflection that Christians are not simply believers but are part of the total fabric of the societies in which they seek to live our their commitments. TENNEY 96 XXX

70 Rev. Tzing Ts-sing, Ningpo, 24 December 1877. CMS East Asia Archives, Reel 221: C CH 0 30
71 CT to William C. Tenney, Shanghai, 29 September, 1850, Tenney op cit, p. 94.
72 CT to Mrs. Oliver H. Gordon, Shanghai, 11 September 1850, p. 98. Oliver Gordon was a churchwarden of Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn, and Mrs. Gordon was a member of the Ladies Benevolent Society that sponsored Caroline as a missionary.
Her initial task of teaching the youngest boys reflected the assessment of the Bishop and other missionaries that she was skilled in communicating with them, even when the children knew no English. She had an ever-growing workload with twenty-six boys in her care seven days a week. The frequent illnesses of Mary Fay meant that Caroline came into daily working contact with the Rev. Cleveland Keith.

Caroline’s everyday life was very restricted as the general opinion of the mid 19th century was that foreign women could not travel independently outside the mission compound. By the end of the century, although male views remained unchanged women, especially single women, had achieved liberation as far as freedom of movement was concerned.

The daily lives of foreign missionaries were intimately shared. There is a tendency in many missionary publications to ignore or evade personality and other conflicts among missionaries. A classic Chinese case of intra-mission conflict in 19th century China was the marriage of Anna Jakobsen, a Norwegian missionary of the China Inland Mission, whose marriage to a Chinese evangelist resulted in exclusion from the missionary community. 73

The lives of the majority of Chinese in the early 1850s shocked Caroline Tenney 74 Beggars were everywhere and many people were starving. The condition of many children was unendurable. 75 A civil war between the Qing Government and Chinese rebels (Taiping Movement) was raging and tens of thousands of people were dispossessed of what little they possessed and fled into the apparent security of the Treaty Ports where they joined the existing beggars. Like missionaries in situations like modern Afghanistan or other Muslim societies Caroline expressed a sense of “utter weakness” when considering the challenges all around her. 76 Her experience was summed up by her comment to Mr. Lewis that: “Here there is no light, no knowledge of better things.” 77

Accepted foreign ways of thinking and doing at home were often at odds with those

of local people. Caroline described her frustration of dealing with Chinese women.

The minds of the women—that is to say, certainly of the class seen by missionaries—seem distressingly vacant and frivolous and impure. … It is difficult to find a mind, and another difficulty is to touch the heart and moral sense.78

She established herself in the Boys’ School although, as Mary Fay also wrote, she disliked mundane housekeeping functions.

My duties here … to teach three hours a day in English, to have a constant supervision of half the school (i.e., twenty-five or thirty boys) and to provide their clothing, and to attend to the giving out their clean clothes every Saturday.79

Marital prospects re-emerged, producing a “period of the most severe agony” in her life as she faced a third denial of marriage.80

The object of her affections was a very brilliant and fascinating young man; but, as afterward appeared, unstable, erratic, and lacking in moral soundness.81

Within months Caroline was engaged to the Rev. Cleveland Keith, a deeply committed man of firm opinions and genuine intellectual skills, who saw her as “an earnest-minded” woman whose aim was to do right and be useful.82 She worked, he told her, as if a “steam engine is after me.”83 For her part, she saw Keith as “no meteor-like, impulsive genius” and “slow in coming to a decision.”84 Perhaps opposites do attract more than similarities, at least in marriages!

Caroline and Cleveland Keith’s marriage in the mission chapel on the 27th April 1854 at Shanghai was marked by an “air of elegance.” The reception, attended by sixty people, was enhanced by the band of the USS Susquehanna and many of the ship’s officers.85

Mission Church of Our Saviour, Hongkou, Shanghai.

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78 CT to Mrs. Oliver H. Gordon, Shanghai, 5 May 1851, Tenney op cit, p 120.
79 CT to Miss Mary Plumer, Shanghai, 19 April 1851, Tenney op cit, p 213.
80 Tenney op cit, p. 154.
81 Ibid p. 155. The Rev. Cleveland Keith remarked that Caroline apparently withdrew into herself following this episode. Ibid p. 204, while Caroline described the episode as one of “deep anguish.” Ibid p 206.
82 CT to William C. Tenney, Shanghai, 19 September 1853. Tenney op cit p. 204.
83 CT to William C. Tenney, Shanghai, 17 November 1853. Tenney op cit p. 208.
84 CT to William C. Tenney, Shanghai, 3 October 1853. Tenney op cit p. 207.
85 CT to Mrs. Sumner, Shanghai, 23 December 1854. Tenney op cit, p 227.
The Episcopal Mission Buildings at Hongkou, c1855.

BOYS’ SCHOOL
(Building sold in c1862 to provide funds during the loss of income during the Civil War in the United States).

MISSION CHAPEL—
“CHURCH OF OUR SAVIOUR.”

BISHOP’S HOUSE

GIRLS’ SCHOOL

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY BUILDING

MISSION BUILDING

The couple took a six-week honeymoon in Ningpo, her first break in four years. After their return the couple, perhaps not surprisingly, avoided active social life. As a newly wed, Caroline preferred the quiet company of her husband who, she remarked, had a;

Sensitive, shrinking nature, which would avoid contact with the world, and, when wounded, if not too severely, retreats into itself. From this you will also infer that Mr. Keith is one who loves home, as the sweetest refuge in the world.

In August and September 1854 she stated that she was not as well as she had been, due, she believed, to overwork in the school but also to dyspepsia. A month later she reported that Cleveland Keith had been seriously ill for over a month. Missionary duties and domestic housekeeping in a hot and humid climate saw both Caroline and Cleveland lose weight and they were actively looking forward to furlough in America in 1858. She had now assumed responsibility for the new Girls’ School with twenty students, the first missionary school in China to be taught wholly by a woman. She told her niece, Isabel, that she found teaching laborious and trying and kept up only by her duty to God.

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86 Caroline had confided to her old school friend, Mary Plumer, that during her years as a governess in the South, she had “come to prefer the company of my own thoughts to any persons except those for whom I have a particular fondness.” CT to Miss Plumer, 23 October 1844. Tenney op cit, p. 22.
87 CT to Mrs. William T. Cutter, Shanghai, 2 September 1854. Tenney op cit, p. 217.
88 CT to Mrs. Sumner, Shanghai, 23 December 1854. Tenney op cit, p 230.
89 CT to Miss Almira Osborn, Shanghai, 1 November 1854. Tenney op cit, p. 225.
90 CT to Miss Mary Plumer, Shanghai, 7 October 1854. Tenney op cit, p. 220.
91 CT to Mrs. William C. Tenney, Shanghai, August 1855. Tenney op cit, p. 238.
92 CT to the Rev. Dr. William Lewis, Shanghai, 30 November 1855. Tenney op cit, p. 242.
93 CT to Isabel Caroline Tenney, 11 years old, daughter of Rev. William C. Tenney and his first wife, Shanghai, January 1856. Tenney op cit, p 246.
Shanghai and its Suburbs, c 1855.

Chapter 3.
A Married Woman and Missionary.

As a married woman, Caroline assumed a new status among the women missionaries. She wrote an extended letter describing her work.

MISSIONARY WORK OF FEMALE ASSISTANTS IN CHINA. NO. 6.
JOURNAL OF C.

Since my last communication, written in August, our neighborhood has been visited with much sickness. Several of the members of our Mission have been quite ill, but have now nearly all recovered, and have cause to thank God for His mercy and goodness. During the months of September and October, a number of the boys in the school were sick, and for some time nearly half my scholars were unable to be at their recitations. Two of the pupils in this school have died since the unhealthy season commenced; but with these exceptions, the sickness among them has been of a mild form, and we trust the present cold weather will check the prevalence of disease in this neighborhood. I have been pained in going about the country, to see so many persons wearing the badges of mourning; and it is a sad reflection, that of the hundreds in this vicinity, who have passed into eternity during the past summer, so few of them sleep in Jesus.

Though so many of our number have been sick, God has graciously preserved me from any severe attack, and I have been enabled to continue my visits to the day school in the city, with but little interruption. During the hottest weather, I visited the school twice a week, but for sometime past, have gone quite regularly three times. This school, which has now been in operation six months, has been very well attended, the average number being about fifteen. Several of the children have been taken away by their parents, on account of their opposition to the foreign books; others have been withdrawn from the fear that we would take or send them to America at some future time, and one of them has died. The teaching of embroidery, which was substituted for the daily distribution of cash, has so far worked well, and each scholar is now wearing shoes of her own manufacture.

The person at first employed as teacher in this department, I am sorry to say, did not prove all we had hoped, and circumstances rendered it necessary to make a change. The hours from three till five P. M., are given to needlework, except on Wednesdays and Fridays, when the children attend the afternoon service in the church. Their progress in learning has been very satisfactory and encouraging. They have finished the Catechism on the Creed, and also one on the Ten Commandments, and are now ready for that on the Lord’s Prayer and Sacraments, so soon as it is printed. For a reading lesson, they have the Gospel of St. Matthew, and are about half through it; and give intelligent answers to many of my questions. The teacher's own children whose attainments surprised me so much, on my first visit last summer, are still very interesting pupils, and are generally in advance of all the others, though they are much younger. The vestibule on the north side of the church, being very convenient for that purpose, is used to assemble the children in, on the days when they are to be catechised. This place is much more private than their school-room, where, being on a public street, a crowd naturally collects when a foreign lady is to be seen. There are many things in which these Chinese girls differ from those at home; and a few remarks upon some of them may be interesting. To a foreign eye, nothing is more striking than the style of dress, and the small feet. The garments worn by them at this season, consist of a pair of loose, wadded pantalets, and a sack buttoned over at the side. Of the latter article they frequently wear three or four, according to the weather. Each one of these, having cotton in it, adds considerably to their
size, and we find that a bench which will accommodate eight girls very comfortably in the summer, is rather crowded when the number of jackets has been increased from one to four. The material most generally used in making their clothes, is dark blue cotton cloth; sometimes children in better circumstances are dressed in silk.

The Chinese not Particularly Neat.

As the Chinese are not remarkable for their cleanliness, we cannot expect much of that excellent trait in children, whose parents toil hard for their daily bread. We endeavor to impress upon them the necessity of purity, both of mind and body, and trust our instructions will not be lost upon them. Chinese females generally dress their hair neatly and tastefully, and are very fond of ornamenting it with flowers. Their custom of wearing no bonnets in the street, enables them to display this taste to much advantage.

Upon entering the school-room, a few days since, I noticed several things, which I thought would very naturally draw forth some expressions of surprise from persons unacquainted with the customs of the Chinese. The first was a large teapot, which stood on a table, and out of which, from time to time, the girls came and refreshed themselves. This article would be as indispensable as the chairs and tables, and a draught from it always be preferred to a cup of cold water. The second thing which attracted the attention, was a pile of dirt in one corner, apparently the sweepings of a week or two. When I remonstrated with them about it, they replied in the calmest manner, that it was only the dust which had been swept from the floor. As it was not repugnant to their feelings I said no more about it, and changed the subject. But; my little charge cannot be commended for personal neatness, they certainly deserve praise for their habitual politeness. As they come in, followed by their teacher, each one seems to exert her voice to the utmost, as she repeats the usual salutation—"Haw la va? mong-mong noong," i. e. " Are you well? I salute you." If any one enters while they are reciting, they all rise and go through the same form.

They are Polite.

The same regard to politeness is observed when they are about to leave, each one saying, "I am going," sometimes adding that she will come on the morrow; to which I must reply, "Go slowly," an instruction which is almost needless, with their little cramped feet, in these crowded streets. But it is not only in person and manners, that they are unlike children in Christian countries. We, whose blessed work it is to instruct them, cannot but thank God that our early years were spent in a more highly favored land. The effect of heathenism, in narrowing the mind, is sensibly felt when engaged in teaching those who have never experienced the genial influence of Christianity upon their hearts. So few of those who are parents are able to read, and so little provision is made in their literature for the youthful mind, that apart from the every day matters of life, the education of a child in China is of the moat limited kind; and when, in the providence of God, they are brought under Christian instruction, the contrast to those without that privilege, is most gratifying and encouraging. Will not our fellow-Christians at home aid us in our work, by praying that the Lord of the harvest will bless the seed that is being sown, and cause it to bring forth an hundred fold to His honor and glory.

Class of Women under Instruction.

The class of women, consisting mostly of communicants, come quite regularly whenever the church is open, and in addition to the service, are privately instructed by Chai and others, several times a week. They are much interested, when we read to them from the book of Genesis, and from frequent repetition have become familiar with the history of the creation, the fall of man, and the account of the patriarchs. One poor old woman has been coming since last July. From that time until now, she has been trying to learn the Creed; and though she cannot yet repeat it verbatim, has rested from that for a while, and
has undertaken the Lord's Prayer. **These women are all very poor, and need a great deal of assistance from us.** In addition to the small weekly allowance, which each one receives, they were all furnished, last week, with warm clothing, and wore it for the first time when they came to the Communion on Christmas day.

*Progress among them Slow.*

The progress of the work among these old people is very slow, and we find much difference between their aptness to learn, and that of the children in the schools; though now, after years of patient teaching, they are familiar with many passages of Scripture, and can repeat the "General Confession," "General Thanksgiving," "Confession in the Communion Service," and several other parts of the Church service. Among the female communicants, the most interesting to me are two blind women, who for several months have come to me for instruction. One of them, Yang-mu-kiung, visits me twice a week, but as she lives some distance, is not so well known to us as the other, who occupies a room on the Bishop's premises. Nien-ka-boo boo, as she is called, is a person in whom we all have confidence, and her manner and conversation, are always that of one who has felt the power of the religion of Jesus. One Sunday morning a few weeks ago, she, with several others, had come as usual after the chapel service, to be instructed. When about to leave, one of them appealed to the Bishop, who was standing near, to aid her in paying her house rent. When she had finished, Nien-ka-boo boo, turning to the Bishop and laughing heartily, said, "Un sien-sang," "I dwell in my own house." Her entire satisfaction in her independent circumstances, which was evident from her manner, reminded us of "the great woman" of the Bible, and we thought she might be called the Chinese Shunamite.⁹⁴

The boy's school continues very much as usual. The Bishop conducts the morning prayers in Chinese, and Miss Fay those in the evening, in English. Their improvement in English is not so rapid as their teacher's desire; but the Bishop, who examines them from time to time, assures us that they are making some progress, and frequently reminds us that it is "by patient continuance in well doing, that we are to seek for glory, and honor, and immortality." While we have the promise, that "in due season, we shall reap if we faint not,"—though trials and difficulties may come, and do come, we will not despair, but look to Him who can give us His blessing. The scholars are looking forward to their usual vacation, at the Chinese New Year, about five weeks from this time, and are making preparations for the examination that precedes it.⁹⁵

Health problems among missionaries in China paralleled those of people of similar background at home. Foreigners found living and working in China demanding emotionally as well as physically and stress related illnesses were common.⁹⁶ Many had to return home after just a few years although this was sometimes a reflection not so

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⁹⁴ Second Book of Kings: 2 Kings ch 4, vv8-37. The point of the observation was that the Shunamite woman was satisfied with what she had.


⁹⁶ Detailed statistics are difficult to find. Brotchie calculated that 20% of Australian CIM missionaries returned home due to ill health and a similar number cut short their terms for other reasons. Half of all Australian CIM missionaries stayed less than 10 years in China, a period comparable to the other Protestant missionary societies. Brotchie, Phillip, (2003), *The Importance of the contribution of Australians to the penetration of China by the China Inland Mission in the period 1888-1953*, pp 44-46, p 178. The most detailed study, on American Protestants, is that of Lennox, William G, (1933), *The Health and Turnover of Missionaries*, New York, The Foreign Missions Committee.
much of physical or mental illness as frustration and disappointment, coupled in many cases with intercultural confusion.\textsuperscript{97}

Missionaries fell into two broad categories for length of missionary service in China. About half stayed less than ten years, and the rest much longer, up to forty or more years.\textsuperscript{98} After nearly eighteen months in China a very young (just 21 years of age) Australian woman, Nellie Saunders, wrote to her mother in Melbourne:

So many of the best workers have either been invalided home, perhaps never to come back, through persisting in going on with their work during July and August. I think it is one of the trials that we must take as Hobson’s choice, that we must leave at that time. The sun seems to affect you head if it can shine on your back even! It is so funny. The other day I was travelling into the country (in the end of June this was) and as I was riding along I felt myself getting very sick, and a deadly sleepy feeling creeping over me. I couldn’t think what was the matter with me, and hoped I should be all right by the time we reached the place where I should have to talk to the women. At last I thought, ‘I believe it must be the sun shining in through some place in my quilt!’ So the next resting place, I got out, and sure enough they had fastened up the quilt so badly across the back of my chair that the sun could shine in, but only on my back—it could not shine on my head—but all the same it seemed to have just the same effect. Was not that strange? \textsuperscript{99}

Caroline had become a thoroughly enculturated Episcopalian and had no hesitation in advising her friends and relatives, most of whom were hostile to Anglican formality, of the glories of liturgical worship.\textsuperscript{100} In this she may have reflected the influence of her husband, who favoured a more formal style of worship than most of his clergy colleagues.\textsuperscript{101} She told her brother that:

I believe that a Christian character modelled from early youth by the teaching of the Prayer Book, and inspired by its reverent, humble, trusting, joyful, filial spirit, is more likely to be a beautiful and symmetrical one than that trained in any other school.\textsuperscript{102}

After several years in China, and marriage to an intensely busy husband, Caroline was caught up in a very busy lifestyle that began to seriously affect her health. In 1856, with both Cleveland and Caroline Keith experiencing serious illness, they returned to the United States, arriving in New York on 1 May.\textsuperscript{103} Shortly afterwards she told a friend

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\textsuperscript{98} Lennox, op cit.
\textsuperscript{100} CT to Miss Charlotte Goodridge, Shanghai, 29 October 1854. Tenney op cit, pp 220-224.
\textsuperscript{101} CT to Mrs. Sumner, Shanghai, 23 December 1854. Tenney op cit, p 229.
\textsuperscript{102} CT to Rev. William C. Tenney, Shanghai, 17 December 1861. Tenney op cit, p. 334.
\textsuperscript{103} Spirit of Missions, Vol 22 No 6, June 1857, p. 290.
It hurts me to lift a chair, or even a heavy plate … it is hard to be sick. But I hope I shall be able to resign life, health, and comfort into the hands of Him whose purposes are all of wisdom and love.  

Her dyspepsia, coupled with increasing bouts of diarrhea, had reached a stage where she ate only dry bread, plain steak or chicken and a little chocolate. Everything else caused excruciating pain. It is possible that she was suffering from irritable bowel syndrome. Their stay in America was very brief and early in 1857 they were back in Shanghai.

104 CT to Miss Goodridge, 1 May 1856. Tenney op cit, p, 251.
105 CT to Mrs. Oliver H. Gordon, Shanghai, 10 May 1856.
Chapter 4.

Not Divided in Death.

Cleveland and Caroline Keith left Shanghai for the United States on 1 January 1857 and arrived there in April. They spent two years in various parts of the country on a mix of deputational work and family reunions. They left New York in May 1859, arriving in Hong Kong after an appalling voyage on a poorly managed ship, on 8 September 1859, arriving in Shanghai on 19 October. They resumed their mission duties more or less where they had left them two years previously but found that as a result of the American Civil War no funds were being received and the mission was effectively closing down with property being sold to meet expenses. Within eighteen months the Keith’s had resumed an excessively busy lifestyle grounded in their deepest Christian beliefs and values. She described her activities to one of her friends at home.

SHANGHAI, Feb. 14th, 1861.

The accession to our number in December, 1859, as you know, added to my domestic cares and labors, so that I had not the uninterrupted time nor the untaxed strength to give to the work I love best, and I only attempted the care of one day-school and some effort at translating. The unsettled state of the country has, I believe, affected all the day-schools, and I know of some that are disbanded, because no scholars will come. I have not as yet been able to raise mine to its former quality or number, but I can not give up without a year more of effort. You know so well what they are in general character, that I need not describe them.

During the first half of last year, I finished the translation of the Child’s Book on the Soul, by Gallaudet, and it is through the press, except a few pages. I hope it may help in the work of education, and stimulate the Chinese pupils to thought and to some feelings of adoration to the Father of spirits. Just before Christmas, I began a new school at Tse Oong Pang, the same hamlet where the old lady teacher Koo-niang-niang worked her last year. It is pleasant to hear the people speak of her as one who “truly believed,” and was most diligent, early and late, in reading the Bible. And, indeed, my most vivid recollection of her is of one who was most eager to make herself acquainted with the inheritance purchased for her by her Saviour, and glad to go and be with Him. The present teacher is a young girl once in one of my day-schools, and then a pupil of Mrs. Bridgman’s. She is young and not a Christian, and I can not tell yet what her success will be; but I feel very anxious that every right advantage should be given to the girls taught in Christian schools, that parents may see that it is some “use” to let their girls study books.

Sometimes quite a number of women of the hamlet, and youths, come in to listen while I am talking to the children. I am going to try to induce the younger women to learn to read, by offering them a reward, and the young teacher a fee for teaching them. I know not which will prosper, this or that, but I must try every practicable means of drawing their attention to the tidings of great joy.

I have begun the translation of Gallaudet’s *Youth’s Book of Natural Theology* and hope to finish it by May or June, and to see it in print by autumn.\textsuperscript{107} It is intended to follow the book spoken of above, and perhaps will open to the pupils in the schools a new page of thought. I hope it may give stimulus to their minds, and open their eyes to some of the wonders of daily life, that they may learn to adore the Creator and to feel themselves surrounded by his power and goodness. Hitherto there have been few school-books prepared, partly because the Bible required so much of the available time and attention, partly that there was so much else to do, there was little leisure for translating and preparing school-books. Some Geographies and Arithmetics and *Line upon Line*\textsuperscript{108} are, so far as I know, all that Ningpo and Shanghai combined, have hitherto done for school-books, beside Catechisms. Now that children are in the schools from six to ten years, their minds need to be enriched more with general knowledge, and to be stimulated to observation and reflection and reasoning. I have in view one or two books when I shall have finished the *Theology*; and I shall aim to translate at least one book a year as long as I live in China, and health and strength sufficient for the labor he granted me. I have been translating some little tales, mostly relating to converted heathen. These I expect to have printed soon, and bound up with the reprint of *Henry and his Bearer*. New plans and new works open before me continually, and new hope and new joy in pressing forward to the accomplishment of these.

And while the preparation and translation of school-books is a work upon which my heart is much set, I am also anxious to do more for the Chinese adult women than I have hitherto done, and if possible, to be among them more. The sixteen months since our return to China have certainly and by unanimous opinion been most remarkable as to the continuance of rainy and inclement weather. It has kept the country roads almost impassable, and the sky dark and gloomy, and has really been a hindrance to outdoor missionary labors among the stronger sex, certainly not less so in the way of women.

I have spoken hopefully above of plans and labor, but I have not been without discouragements and trials to faith. Soon after my arrival, I took to live with me a bright young girl who had been in the boarding-school, but being found incorrigible in binding her feet, was sent away. She was a quick scholar, and I sent. Her to the day-school constantly. At the time of the Rebel panic, her mother begged that she might take her to a ship with her, where her husband (not the girl’s father) was, and that as soon as the troubles were over, she would bring her back. But she carried her off to Canton, and has doubtless, ere this, sold her to some heathen Canton man. And to add to my regret, the Chinese now tell me that the girl was unwilling to go, but that her mother terrified her into going. She took her Christian books with her, and I can only pray the Great Shepherd to look after this lamb in the wilderness, and lead her to himself. He can make affliction a blessing to her.

I prevailed upon the mother of another girl, formerly in my day-school, a. very bright scholar, to permit her daughter to come to live with me, that I might support her and send her to school, and fit her for a teacher. She came a. while, and my hopes were quite raised, but the mother would not let the child rest, and she left me. These have been disappointments that I much felt, for the girls were very interesting, and their welfare was dear to me. Another cause of anxious feeling is the woman who has been teacher of my day-school since 1854. She is very intelligent and capable, but utterly uninterested in religious truth.

These things try the faith, the patience, the endurance, and drive us to the promises and to


Him who sent us hither. We there learn again, not to be weary in well-doing, being assured that “we shall reap if we faint not.”

Believing that God has purposes of mercy toward his people, and knowing that he is faithfulness and truth, and that his promise and purpose can never fail, we wait indeed; and sometimes the delay seems long, but we wait in hope, trusting in God. He called Jonah to warn Nineveh, and it repented, but had not one repented, it was no less his duty to proclaim the word of God. So has our Lord said to his Church, “Teach all nations;” and in doing his will, we need not fear to leave results to him. Though it may not please him to grant to us the success so naturally desired by every human heart, we are persuaded that others will reap it; for it is the order of nature in many things, and preeminently so in the kingdom of grace—“one man laboreth, and another entereth into his labors.” But even to us it may be granted before we “depart,” that in this land “our eyes should see the salvation” of our God.

When I book my pen, I had no idea of writing so much at length, but as I do not write often, I think I am sure of your indulgence. I felt that you would be interested in my quiet and humble labors. I ought to have mentioned the great assistance I obtained from Mr. Keith in the preparation of the manuscripts of my translations for the printer, and in the correction of “proofs,” and in the business of buying the paper, and of having the books bound. He greatly expedites all my plans in these things, and encourages me in my undertakings.

Although Cleveland Keith was in good health, Caroline was again failing and the two took leave in Japan, arriving in Kanagawa in March 1862 aware that it was unlikely that they would return to Shanghai. While there, suffering acute diarrhea, she was thrown from a horse, and a hemorrhage began that continued unchecked. She also experienced severe ulceration of her mouth and tongue.

Her mouth has been filled with ulcers—ont he tongue, cheeks, palate, and roof of the mouth, a large part of the time, and she has been so weak more than half the time, as not to leave her bed.

There was no option but to return to America and they arrived in San Francisco on 27th June 1862.

110 CT to Isabel Caroline Tenney, Shanghai January 1862. Tenney op cit, p. 343. CT to Miss Mary Plumer, Kanagawa, Japan, 8 May 1852. Tenney op cit, p. 357.
111 CT to Miss Mary Plumer, Kanagawa, Japan, 8 May 1852. Tenney op cit, p. 357.
Bishop Boone had written on 3 May advising the Committee that he expected Caroline Keith to go on to family in New York and, providing there were no further concerns about her condition, that her husband would return to Shanghai.\textsuperscript{112} Cleveland Keith wrote to the Foreign Missions Committee soon after their arrival in San Francisco.

San Francisco, June 27th 1862.

REV. AND DEAR BROTHER: I suppose this will reach you in advance of my last, sent by way of Shanghai.\textsuperscript{113} If so, it will be the first information you will get of our voyage. We found that Mrs. Keith's health only grew worse in Japan, and that the only resource was to try a trip home by California. Just as we had made up our minds to go back to Hong Kong to seek a vessel there, we happily heard of this bark, (the Rival,) and by favor of one of the passengers secured a passage. Mrs. Keith was so weak, she had to be brought on board in a bed, and has not yet been able to leave her berth; indeed, she can not turn in it without assistance; yet I hope her system is in somewhat better condition than when we left. We have had a quick and comfortable voyage of thirty days, and the captain and other passengers have been kind and sympathizing.

Saturday, June 28th. — The few lines on the other page were written yesterday as we were coming up to our anchorage, so as to be ready in case any thing should occur to prevent my writing before the mail left. I find now that I may be detained on board nearly all or all day, as the wind is too strong to allow us to take Mrs. Keith off in a boat, and the vessel is not yet alongside the wharf. I expected to stay, while here, with Mr. Loomis, but received a note this morning to inform me that he was to leave on account of ill-health, on Monday, and conveying me an invitation to stay with Mrs. Kip (the Bishop being absent) while here. We accordingly expect to go there so soon as circumstances permit Mrs. Keith to be moved.

Our stay here will be only until she can recruit sufficiently to travel, which, I hope, may be in two or three weeks. I will try and write you particularly by what steamer we shall come, if I find it is possible.

Monday, June 30th,—We were brought safely, by the kindness of some gentlemen, to Mrs. Kip's on Saturday night, and are most comfortably established here It is too soon to say about Mrs. Keith's health yet.\textsuperscript{114}

Caroline died on 10 July and her body was placed in a “receiving vault” in a local cemetery pending final interment in New York.\textsuperscript{115} Cleveland Keith took ship for the East on the 27\textsuperscript{th} July.

The Bishop of California gave an account of events in the last days of both Mr. and Mrs. Keith to Dr. Tyng, a prominent clergyman in New York, and a relative of Cleveland Keith.

\textsuperscript{112} Bishop Boone to Foreign Missions Committee, 3 May 1862, \textit{Spirit of Missions}, Vol 27 No 8, August 1862, p. 252.
\textsuperscript{113} Rev. Cleveland Keith to Foreign Missions Committee, Kanagawa, Japan, 10 May 1862, \textit{Spirit of Missions}, Vol 27 No 9, September 1862, p. 266.
\textsuperscript{114} Rev. Cleveland Keith to Foreign Missions Committee, 30 June 1862, \textit{Spirit of Missions}, Vol 27 No 8, August 1862, p. 252.
\textsuperscript{115} It was not uncommon for bodies to be held in a ‘receiving vault” pending final burial.
Keith. The Christian Times gives us the following very interesting letter from the Bishop of California, with additional details concerning the death of Mr. and Mrs. Keith.

San Francisco, Aug. 7, 1862.

REV. AND DEAR SIR: Long before this reaches you, the telegraph will have brought you the sad news of the burning of the steamer "Golden Grate," and the loss of your relative, the Rev. Cleveland Keith. (Sunday, p.m., July 27). I know not what he may have written from here, to his friends at the East, with regard to the illness and death of his wife; but, as he expected to see you soon "face to face," he probably reserved most of his intelligence until that time. I feel it a duty, therefore, to write you some particulars of the last days of this estimable and devoted couple, as that time was passed in my house.

On the 28th of June (Saturday), the ship arrived from China. I was at that time absent on a visitation at Nevada. Mr. Keith had a letter to Mr. Wm. R. Wadsworth, of this city, which he at once sent to him. On learning the circumstances of the case, Mr. Wadsworth informed Mrs. Kip, who, learning that a clergyman had arrived with his sick wife, immediately sent for them to be brought to our house, where they came that evening. A mattress was placed on a state-room door, and on this Mrs. Keith was carried up to the house.

I returned home the following Tuesday evening, and found her so ill that she had to be fed in bed; and so she continued for two weeks until her death. During all this time, the devotion of her husband, night and day, was unceasing, until we began to fear that his own constitution would sink under it. I generally saw her but once a day, going in in the evening after dinner, and talking with them for from one to two hours.

Mrs. Keith seemed to be rather improving until two days before her death. On the very day of her death, she talked to Mrs. Kip about trying a water cure, and even sent for the doctor to consult with him. On the evening of Thursday, July 10, she became worse, and the physician who attended her was sent for. He was rather inclined to believe the attack a high state of nervous excitement, but remained by her bedside. I had prayers with her during the evening, as her husband afterward had. She continued, in reply to his questions, to give the most unwavering declarations of her faith and trust in her Lord. About eleven the doctor said that her pulse had risen, and her system seemed to have rallied. We thought the danger was over, but it was the last flutter of life, and she died at 11.30. It was as calm and Christian a death as could ever be witnessed.

The funeral took place the following Saturday. A few friends assembled at my house, where we had prayers, and then went to the Church of the Advent, where the burial service was performed by Rev. Mr. Brotherton, of St. John's Church, and myself. The funeral then moved to the cemetery, three miles distant, where the body was placed in the receiving vault, and I read the burial service.

For the next ten days, Mr. Keith remained with us, until he sailed, July 21; and never have I had any one an inmate in my house to whom, in a few weeks, I became so much attached. His devotion to his work, together with his refined, unselfish nature, enlisted the interest of all who knew him. Of our city clergy, Rev. Dr. Clark and Messrs. Brotherton and Easton were marked by their attentions to him. It was once my privilege to be a pupil under his father, Rev. Dr. Keith, when he was in the Virginia Theological Seminary; so that we had many reminiscences of the past to call up, and I now look back with melancholy pleasure to our many conversations. He showed, too, such a lively interest in everything pertaining to our diocese, and volunteered to me the offer, when in the Atlantic States, to use his influence in procuring us clergy. I looked to an acquaintance here as the beginning of a pleasant intercourse which, I hoped, would last for years.
Friday, the 18th, I was obliged to go into the interior. Mr. Keith drove down with me to the steamer in which I was going, and we parted on her deck, his last words being, "God bless your work in this diocese."

On Sunday morning (Mr. Easton being ill), Mr. Keith supplied my place in Grace Church. In the afternoon, he went with Mrs. Kip to a mission school and church we have begun in a distant part of the city, where he delivered an interesting address on his missionary labors in China. In the evening, with Mrs. Kip and Mr. Wadsworth, he went out to the Dolores Mission (three miles), and preached for Mr. Brotherton. Such were the labors of his last Sunday on earth.

As I was absent, Mrs. Kip invited Mr. Wadsworth to breakfast with Mr. Keith on Monday morning. He went down with him to the steamer, where I had previously procured for him a good state room, and given him a note of commendation to the captain. There he parted with him, and we were in daily expectation of hearing from him from Acapulco, when last night came the sad news.

I have tried to learn from those who were saved some particulars about him. One person says that Mr. Keith behaved with the greatest courage, aiding in helping the women and children, and when the steamer struck, threw himself into the water, but was seen to sink.

Will you tender to his family my sympathy for their loss? I feel for them and with them, for I had learned to respect and love him. He was one whose influence our church could not well afford to lose, and we must sorrow thus to see "the faithful diminished from among the children of men." He has now joined his wife, so that, in death, they were but little divided.

Believe me, my dear sir, yours very sincerely, WM. INGRAHAM KIP.

August 8.

I have made diligent inquiry among those who were saved, and there is but one voice with regard to his bravery and coolness. He seemed to care for the safety of every one but himself. One man, after speaking of his conduct in terms of the highest admiration, ended with saying, "Well, after all, it is a good thing to be a Christian, and I believe I'll be one!" Such was the last lesson taught by the life of our friend.

The Bulletin last evening contained the following notice:

"The Rev. C. Keith was a clergyman of the Episcopal Church, who was for a while stationed in China, as a missionary. He came to San Francisco, with his wife, in the hope that her health, which was very much broken, would be improved by the voyage. She died, however, in this city, on the 10th of July. Mr. Keith then determined to return to the States. Mr. Murphy, one of the saved, says that, while the panic was greatest, a little boy, some two years old, came running up to him, asking him to find his mother, from whom he had been parted. The woman, turning to Mr. Murphy, begged him to save her boy. He told her he would try, and, taking him on his back, asked some one to tie his burden to him. Then the Her. Mr. Keith drew his handkerchief, and, fastening it to Mr. Murphy's handkerchief, Mr. Keith lashed the little one to his preserver's back. 'The Lord save you and the little child.' said Mr. Keith, and with this benediction Murphy leaped into the sea. The two were saved. Another one of the saved says that he found Mr. Keith swimming by his side, and swimming well. Mr. Keith, occasionally, as he grew weary, turned upon his back and rested. They reached the surf together after which Mr. Keith was seen no more. Mr. Keith had preached in the cabin on the morning of the fatal day. Several unite in saying that he was among the busiest in calming the excited, telling each how he might best behave cool, calm, useful, and active to the last."
Mr. Keith's Chinese Dictionary in MS., on which he had bestowed the labor of years, was lost with him.

On opening Mr. Keith's last will and testament, made in the spring of 1859, just before sailing the last time for Shanghai, and deposited under seal for safe keeping at the Mission Rooms in New York, it was found that he had bequeathed the bulk of his property, to the amount of from eight to ten thousand dollars, to the Protestant Episcopal Board of Foreign Missions, for the benefit of the mission in China.\textsuperscript{116}

The following extracts from the last letters which Mrs. Keith wrote will be read with deep interest. They were addressed to those to whom she was most tenderly attached by ties of relationship and affection.

Extract from a Letter to her Brother.

GREAT has been the sorrow of being thus laid aside from my loved work, and, still more, of being the means of hindering Mr. Keith in his more important labors. But I desire to record it, with deep gratitude, that as our day, so has been our strength, and as our sorrows, so have our consolations abounded. Many and great have been the mercies that have followed us; precious are the promises on which we lean and by which we live. "Our God shall supply all our need," yea, in all things. In some of the more severe and active attacks of disease, I have felt that, not unlikely, earth for me was passing, and soon I should know by experience of those things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive." In such hours [resumed Tuesday, April 29th] my dear husband and myself have communed together freely of life and of death; of that home above, toward which for years we have been looking. We have long made it not unusual in our conversation to speak of that time when one shall pass on and leave the other alone. We have wished to divest death of its gloom, and to sanctify and chasten and ennoble life, by a constant and cheerful recognition of death as the end of our term of action here, but the beginning of a glorious and perfected life in the presence of our Father and the society of the blest. We rejoice together in the love of God, which seems so great, so "manifested," that, as dear children, we can not "fear," (in that which "hath torment;") and it seems to me, one might as well look up to the sun and say it is nevertheless dark, as for the true believer in Jesus to look upon him and feel afraid! Blessed faith! Those who sleep in Jesus shall God bring with him, and so "we shall be forever with the Lord." But I have yet desired still to remain "present in the body," if it be the will of God, for, not to speak of him whom I should leave bereaved, I greatly long for the privilege of serving my Master yet on the earth. Oh! I see so much to do on every hand, and my mind is just come to its best maturity, and my heart has grown warmer and larger, not smaller and colder, by all the varied discipline of my heavenly Teacher. I feel better prepared to serve him, if he see fit, than ever before, and oh! the service, even on earth, is so full of joy, albeit of trial. I could wish, too, for myself, and still more for Mr. Keith, to remain and labor among the heathen; but if God in his providence determine otherwise, what have we to do with sad faces and vain wishes? No; if God give us strength, right gladly shall we gird on the harness at home. To-day, Mr. Keith has gone to look for a ship back to Shanghai, whence, after the briefest possible tarry, we shall take steamer for Hong Kong, and thence to California — the prospect of a ship from here direct is so remote and indefinite. In the mean time, new weaknesses have supervened, for which these short, broken sea-voyages promise the best remedy. I am writing this in bed, not because I could not get up, but because it is probably better that I should remain recumbent.

I have purposely written thus fully and frankly, my dear brother, feeling that it is what I

\textsuperscript{116} Tenney op cit, pp 373-376
should desire another loved one to do by me. I am very hopeful, and the doctor entirely so, of my living to reach the United States, and of my ultimate recovery. But life at the best is uncertain, and if this were to prove my last, you would rejoice to have known so much of my mind and heart.

May 10th.—... My health does not vary much, but every thing conspires to make us feel that the path of duty is plain—to go hence without waiting longer. Just now I am suffering from the most painful of the many times cankered mouth—and as the ulcers are on the tip and under the tongue, you may imagine there is no respite to the pain and irritation. There are other ulcers, but these I do not feel, so surpassing is the torment of the tongue. "Patience, patience," is my constant prayer.

There is much more in mind and heart that I would love to express, but my letter is already too long, and I will hope for another and better opportunity. Of Mr. Keith's devoted and watchful care I have said nothing. You can imagine it to be all that a sick wife could desire. Truly, in him God gave me the "hundredfold in this life," promised to those who leave what is dearest for Christ's sake.

With tender love to all, Your ever-affectionate sister.

Extract of Letter to an intimate Friend.

There is much that attracts me to life, and besides I feel that I am now just in the full maturity of the powers God has given me; and I do so earnestly desire to live to serve him more worthily. The doctor says I can never live in Shanghai again, and it is probable that if I live, my work will be at home. But, oh! I see so much to do there, my mind and heart are ready to fill themselves with plans. Oh! that God may raise me up to be an instrument in his hand of much usefulness. If Mr. Keith should wish to return to China to finish his translations, I would say, 'Go;' for he is the Lord's servant, and the work in China is very dear to my heart too. Oh! how much I had planned to do there, even in this year 1862, in which I am a helpless invalid.

During the almost five months that I have now been so entire an invalid, I have been truly supported by the grace of my Father. Hitherto he has granted me patience under my sufferings and submission to his will. It is my prayer that he will continue to 'supply all my need,' and make his grace sufficient for me. Very precious have been the teachings of these days, and often I have felt that I was learning some of the most invaluable lessons of my life, so that I need not in truth regard these as days lost to the work, since I am sure that by them (if God please to raise me up) I shall be fitted so much better for higher and nobler work, in the power and with the blessing of God. I feel sometimes as though he would certainly raise me up, since he is taking so much pains to chasten, try, refine, purify, and teach; and since he knows the longing of my heart to be altogether his, he will abundantly hear my prayer and be with me.117

Caroline’s body was brought by ship to New York the following year. A service was held in Holy Trinity Church from whence she had left for China thirteen years earlier and she was buried in Hilly Ridge, Greenwood Cemetery on 14 May 1863.

Memorials to Rev. Cleveland Keith
and Mrs. Caroline Phebe Tenney Keith.

Green-Wood Cemetery
New Hampshire,
Section 22, Lot 14125
There is a single monument on this lot, eroded and barely legible. It is impossible to be certain whether there is an inscription for Caroline Keith or not. But on the front of the bottom panel, this much text can be discerned:
"The Rev. Cleveland Keith was the son of …
The Foreign Committee of the Board of Missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in grateful remembrance of these faithful servants of Christ caused this stone to be erected."

South Cemetery, Hollis, Hillsborough County,
This monument commemorates the Parents of Caroline Phebe (nee Tenney) Keith.
The inscription reads:
CAROLINE PHEBE, Only daughter of William and Phebe Tenney.
Born in Newmarket May 13, 1821.
Went as missionary to China in 1850.
Was married in Shanghai to Rev. Cleveland Keith, April 1854.
Died on her return for her health in San Francisco, July 10, 1862.
Was buried in Greenwood Cemetery, Brooklyn, N.Y. May 11, 1863,