

HUDSON



I wonder what you are wearing at this very moment? Are you perhaps tucked up in bed with your pyjamas on, having a last good night story? Or are you in your everyday clothes just having a look to see what this book is all about?

Whatever your clothes today, I'm quite sure you don't look like this boy. He is dressed in the clothes of 100 years ago. His name is Hudson Taylor. This book is all about him.





TABLE TIPS!

"Please may I have the salt?" asked Hudson.
One by one the visitors round his mother's table looked at him. Then they looked at Mrs Taylor who had just finished serving.
Hudson blushed. He hoped his plan would work. He was still quite a small boy but he could think!

"And what do you want the salt for?" his neighbour asked at last. For Hudson's plate was empty—his mother had forgotten to give him any dinner!

How would you have reminded your Mum? One hundred years ago customs were different. Hudson had been told not to ask for things at the table, except for salt.

His clever idea worked and he sat munching—munching and listening. The visitors weren't talking about TV programmes, nor the latest cricket score, nor fashion, nor the weather. Their conversation was about far-off lands. This is where Hudson first heard about China—a huge country far across the sea, with millions of people who had never heard about Jesus.



HUDSON MAKES A PROMISE

Hudson spooned apple pie into his mouth. His mother had forgotten to serve it too! He had been forced to ask. "Do you think apple pie is good for little boys?" His father was still talking about China.

"Why does the church send no missionaries there?" he was asking. "That is the country to aim at. China is crowded with people—strong, intelligent people."

China did have millions of people and Hudson never forgot that. He never forgot that conversation at the meal table either.

Some time after this, when Hudson was a much bigger boy, he came to know the Lord Jesus as his Saviour. He promised God he would go anywhere in the world for Him. Could it be that God would want him to go to China—that foreign land so far away?

Yes, it was true. God did want him to go. From then on Hudson's mind was truly made up. He started to prepare himself for his great adventure with God.

WEDDING BELLS

Mom bells are ringing now. Not for a meeting this time, but for a wedding! Hudson had fallen in love with a girl called Maria. Maria was a teacher in China and she was an orphan. Over 100 years ago it was difficult to get permission to marry but Hudson waited and hoped and hoped and waited. At last one day, word came from Maria's guardian in England that she could marry the young missionary.



How excited they were! In fact one evening when they were playing a game round a table with some friends, Maria decided to give Hudson's hand a squeeze under the table! What do you think she did? She caught hold of the wrong person's hand! Poor Maria! She had never been so embarrassed in all her life.

The wedding took place in January, 1858. It was a beautiful day and Maria looked lovely in her silk gown and veil. Hudson decided he would get married in his Chinese clothes so they looked quite different from each other.

From then on, the story wasn't just about Hudson. It was Hudson AND Maria.

THREE MR WANGS!

Is there a telephone in your house? Quite often we use the telephone directory to look up the number we are going to ring. One of the hardest names to find is Mr Smith's. In the directory are hundreds of Mr Smiths! In China there are hundreds of Mr Wangs.

One Mr Wang Hudson knew was a basket maker. A good thing happened to him—he became a Christian. He used to work seven days every week. Now he would only work six, even though he got less money. You see, he wanted to go to church on Sundays now.

Mr Wang really loved the Lord Jesus so God let him find other Chinese people for Him. He found another Mr Wang. This one was a farmer and he was searching for the true religion. He heard Mr Wang, the basket maker, talking about the true God so he too trusted Jesus to forgive his sins.

Mr Wang, number three, was a painter. One day when Mr Wang, number one, was selling baskets in a beautiful home, the painter overheard what he was saying. Mr Wang, the painter, was high on a ladder and no one noticed him listening to the conversation.

"I will not make baskets for incense for idols," Mr Wang, number one, was saying, "for I love the true God!" Afterwards Mr Wang, the painter, wanted to hear more and he, too, decided to believe in Jesus.

How glad Hudson was to see no less than three Mr Wangs arriving at his home to meet him!



CHINA AT LAST

"Du-ee, Du-ee," sang the Chinese coolies as they marched through Shanghai. Hudson had just arrived in China and was leading the procession of coolies through the crowded streets. His belongings were swinging from bamboo poles across their shoulders.

"Du-ee, Du-ee," sounded so odd! Hudson wondered if perhaps the coolies were in pain! Everything seemed different at last. It was a good thing he had met another missionary who was going to share his house with him. It was a shock to Hudson to discover very soon that Shanghai was at war. Soldiers were



fighting in the streets. Guns were firing, day and night. It was a miserable place to be. Hudson had come to tell the people about the Lord Jesus. Now he found it was dangerous to go out of the house! In any case, he couldn't speak Chinese.

Perhaps we would have felt like going home. But Hudson stuck it out. Already the time had come to pray and trust God as his motto said.

SPIES?



What a good break it was from studying the Chinese language to go out in a boat for the day. Hudson and two friends went off down the river, with booklets about Jesus. All afternoon was spent trying to explain to the Chinese people what the little books meant and at last three good missionaries were ready to sail home.

"It has been really worth while," one said to the other.

"I feel like a real missionary at last," thought Hudson.

Darkness was falling. As they approached Shanghai they began to wonder how they could get past the soldiers' boats. In the darkness the soldiers couldn't see that they were only missionaries. Perhaps they would be taken for spies. Perhaps they would be shot at. Their position was really dangerous.

"Let's do something," begged Hudson.

"What?" asked the others.

"I know. Let's sing—in English," suggested one. "Then the soldiers will know we are not Chinese spies."

At the tops of their voices they began to sing. Once, they all began a different hymn at the same time! But it worked. They were able to pass the guard boats in safety. Whew! It had been a narrow escape.