



THE TEA-PARTY

Desmond Ford

If anyone has read to you from **Alice in Wonderland**, you have heard of the Mad Hatter's Tea-Party. But actually there are more important tea-parties that really and truly happened. Let me tell you of one that nearly didn't happen at all!

You have heard of Hudson Taylor, the founder of the China Island Mission. In his early years in China Hudson had no money and no one important knew him. Yet in later years by faith Hudson claimed China for Christ and by the time his own ministry was nearing its close he had almost 700 missionary helpers in that great country where one out of every four people in the world lived last century. Hudson Taylor did great things for God because his own weakness forced him to trust in the power of the great God above. He learned his lesson of faith in the lessons of daily life just as we have to.

I like particularly the story of the tea-party which nearly didn't happen! Hudson had been going out with Maria Dyer, a young

Christian woman left as an orphan in China, who had become a wonderful influence for good among the heathen. Her guardian was much opposed to their friendship and they endured a lot of opposition. One day it seemed that even heaven was against him.

He had invited Maria to a tea-party weeks before when his missionary supplies of food were good. But as the day itself approached Hudson found himself in serious difficulties. Expenses had been heavy on account of giving to the poor of the district, and for

many days there had been no donations or gifts of money come from England. All Hudson owned by way of money on the appointed day was one Chinese "cash" — the twentieth part of a cent!

Hudson and his fellow missionary, Mr. Jones, decided they would try to sell some article to raise money for food. All that could be spared, they thought, was their clock. But on taking it to a shop, the owner demanded that they should leave it for a



week to see if it worked before payment was made. This wasn't much help to them. The only other item that would bring money was an American stove which could be sold for the value of its iron content.

Mr. Taylor and Mr. Jones set off for the foundry some distance away across a river. It took an age to get there. But the ferryman demanded a fare of two cash each — three cash more than they owned. They returned home with the stove praying in their hearts that God would intervene and help them. Searching their cupboards all they could find was a small packet of cocoa powder.

Then a Chinese Christian who worked for them begged them to take some of his small amount of funds. They refused kindly, saying that the Lord could provide in another way and the Chinese man needed his money himself. After his departure Hudson and his friends kneeled to pray once more. While still on their knees, there came a knock at

the door. "Oh, teacher, teacher, here are letters," said the Chinese visitor. Now let me use Hudson's own words:

Once again a mail had arrived from home several days before it was expected, bringing, as we found to our thankfulness, a generous gift. . . .

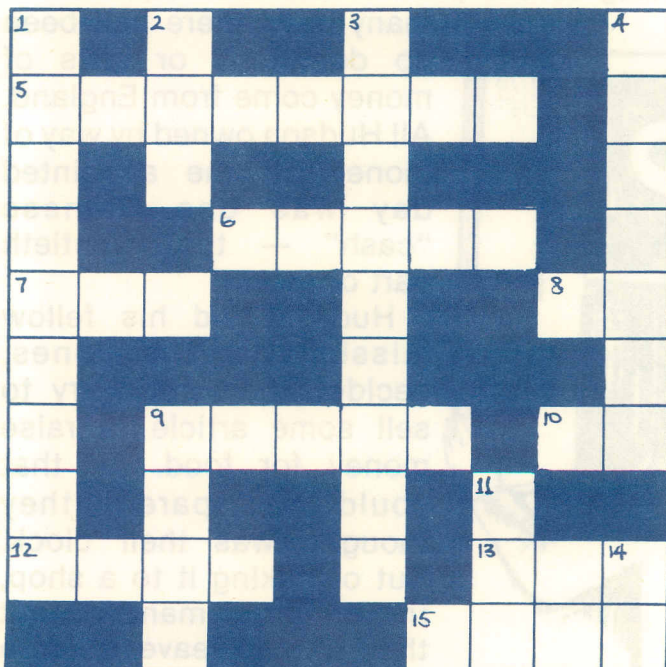
Over a happy tea-table that evening the whole story came out for their hearts were so filled with joy and praise that they could not keep it to themselves. The wedding had been arranged for January 20th, just two weeks later, but in the light of what had happened Hudson Taylor felt he must again make clear to his loved one how full of trials his life was. But Maria interrupted him: "Have you forgotten? I was left an orphan in a far-off land. God had been my Father all these years; and do you think I shall be afraid to trust Him now?"

That tea-party was the beginning of a marriage that resulted in blessing for thousands upon thousands of the inhabitants of heathen China. Shouldn't we also be encouraged to trust God in little and big so that he might use us also?

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Clues Across

5. Hudson invited Maria to one. See the first story (8 letters)
6. Those sirens tried to get the sailors to sail onto these. See **A Sweeter Song** (5 letters).
7. What did Hudson Taylor _____ on the day of Maria's visit? The answer is that he _____ ed the twentieth part of a cent. See **The Tea-Party** (3 letters).



8. "For ___ all fall short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23). I have put in an extra word there and it means you and me (2 letters).
9. The name of Hudson's sweetheart. See **The Tea-Party** (5 letters).
10. "For ___ by one man's disobedience many were made sinners. . ." (Romans 5:19) (two letters).
12. There's one of these above "For Kids" in the heading, and it's not news (4 letters).
13. We all come short of His glory. See **A Sweeter Song** (3 letters).
15. Ulysses was called a great one of these. See **A Sweeter Song** (4 letters).

Clues Down

1. Can he change the color of his skin? See Benjamin's cartoon (9 letters).
2. It was this sort of a hatter that had a famous tea-party. See **The Tea-Party** (3 letters).
3. Can it be a ferry-boat? See Benjamin's cartoon (9 letters).
4. He saved his crew by playing a sweeter song on his lyre. See **A Sweeter Song** (7 letters).
9. Ulysses had his sailors tie him to it. See **A Sweeter Song** (4 letters).
11. It took an _____ for Hudson and Mr. Jones to get to the ferry-boat. See **The Tea-Party** (3 letters).
14. God said to Moses, "But what I'll ___ is to put you in a crack in a rock. . ." See **A Sweeter Song** (2 letters).