

called off to another part of the room, she picked them up, tore off the wrapper, and fairly danced and chuckled as they were revealed in all their fair proportions. Some of the children ran at once to their mothers to display their prizes, and thereby made the mothers as proud and happy as themselves. Many of these small feet would have to go bare all winter were it not for the Christian Sunday School.

Cake was passed around to pupils and visitors, not on plates, but wrapped in paper. This was generally opened and examined, but was not eaten then. As I watched the pupils of this school (our girls) going about among the children, helping to keep order, to pass cake, to do whatever was necessary for the success of the entertainment, and as I saw how happy they were in this work, I was reminded of the text which says: "Freely ye have received, freely give." Surely these young men and women are doing so, and are taking up work which they alone can do among the people.

Afterwards came the stripping of the Christmas tree, on which presents for teachers and pupils were hung by their friends. I had no idea that anything would be put on for me, so was much astonished to hear my name called several times in Japanese or English, and was much touched to think that I had not been forgotten.

Altogether, I spent a most enjoyable Christmas evening—my first in Japan—and will look forward with much pleasure to such gatherings in the future.

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Tibet And Its Opportunities For Missionary Work.

(Paper read at the International Collegiate Missionary Alliance at Belleville, Ont., by J. R. PATTERSON, of Wesleyan Theological College, Montreal.)

AS Tibet is a comparatively unknown region, I may, perhaps, best fulfil the duty assigned me, by giving in concise form some facts concerning the land and its people, the missionary forces at work, and the helps and hindrances to missionary labor.

1. The Land.—Physical features. In territory, Tibet comprises some 700,000 square miles; bounded on the north and east by Turkestan and China, and on the south and west by Burmah and India. Though situated in the same latitude as Egypt, its climate is as cold as that of Siberia. This extreme rigor is due to the fact that it is a country of high plateaus and lofty mountains. Its tablelands range from 10,000 to 17,000 feet in height; and its mountains tower to an elevation of 20,000 to 28,250 feet above the sea. The country may be divided into three zones. First, the southern. Here are extensive forests and some fertile valleys. This zone, it need hardly be said, is the centre of the settled and agricultural population. Second, the middle zone, which contains the pasture lands of the Nomad tribes. Third, the northern zone, for the most part abandoned to wild animals, but also partly occupied by Nomads.

Government.—Tibet is practically a Chinese province. It is true that the right of conquest has never been formally acknowledged; but since 1720 Tibet has paid tribute to Peking; and since 1793 two Chinese Ministers, appointed by the Chinese Government, have taken an active part in the administration. At the same time, a show of independence is maintained. The nominal ruler of Tibet is a personage known as the Dalai Lama, who is also looked upon as the head of the Buddhist religion. And it is in their relation to this nominal head of affairs that the craftiness of the Chinese mind appears. During his minority the government is carried on by a council of priests. The presiding Lama is popularly called the "King of Tibet," and acts on behalf of the Dalai Lama until he becomes of age. But, in order to prevent a popular enthusiasm gathering round a ruler, at once sacred in person and competent in affairs, the Chinese authorities skilfully contrive that the Dalai Lama shall never be aught but a minor. In fact, so

strong is Chinese influence, that the Council of Regents have practically abdicated all secular authority. In dealing with foreign affairs they can do nothing without consulting the resident Chinese ministers, who, in turn, report to the Viceroy of Sz Chuan, and he is controlled by the Colonial Office at Peking.

People.—The latest and most reliable figures gives to Tibet a population of 1,132,362 souls. The people belong to the Mongolian family; but they are more civilized than the Mongols proper, and less so than the Chinese. In appearance they are far from handsome. They have round faces, prominent cheek bones, flat noses, wide mouths, thin lips, and their large black eyes are more slanting than is usual with their race. In stature they are short—men being seldom over five feet four inches, women rarely more than five feet in height—but they are long-lived, active, and strong. Even women can carry burdens of sixty pounds over the high mountain passes. Their complexion seems to be a dark yellow; but, as the children are never washed and as the adults perform ablutions but once a year, the exact tint is rather hard to determine.

Their manner of life is extremely simple. Some of the people live in two-storey houses, perched away up on rocky cliffs, to save arable land. These houses are generally built of mud, though sometimes of brick, and sometimes of stone. The people usually dwell upstairs, while the ground floor is occupied by cattle. In very cold weather, the family sometimes share the lower room with the animals, for the sake of warmth. The greater part of the people, however, live in flat-roofed rectangular tents. Nearly all the Tibetans are farmers. Their chief wealth is in flocks and herds, but in the more fertile districts barley, wheat, rape, buckwheat and peas are raised. All trading is done by barter, as the money is in the hands of the priesthood, and, for the purpose of exchange, fairs are held during August and September in large villages and towns.

Morally, the Tibetans compare favorably with most heathen. Domestic life is generally peaceful. Infanticide is almost unknown, and though families are small, parental affection is strong and children are obedient. Still the people have many of the usual heathen vices. Superstition, cruelty, filthiness, want of perseverance, excessive drinking and smoking, and the use of snuff, together with immorality are their chief failings. On the other hand, they have not a few redeeming qualities. They are hospitable and unsuspicious; affable, but not servile; slow to anger and easily reconciled. Two things lift them distinctly above their neighbors, the Chinese: Opium smoking is exceedingly rare, and their transparent honesty is an example to Western Christians.

The position of woman deserves special mention. With the exception of a few cases among the richer people of the valleys, polygamy is not practised. But Tibet is one of the few countries where polyandry prevails. In the mountainous districts it is usual for a woman to have several husbands. When the eldest son brings home his bride each of his brothers is accepted by her as a subordinate spouse. But all her children are the property of the eldest brother, who is saluted as Big Father, while the younger brothers are each called Little Father. This system is in great favor, and the Tibetans ardently set forth its advantages. They hold that it prevents widowhood; that it keeps the ancestral estate intact; and that it saves women from loneliness and danger in a country where more than half of a man's life must be spent away from home.

Nowhere, perhaps, does the social standing of woman present a stranger anomaly than in Tibet. Before marriage she is simply her father's property, and if she fails to contract matrimony she must become a nun or be cast off to live the life of a beggar. After marriage, however, she becomes the most important factor in the community. All the husband's affairs are under her control. No buying or selling is done without her consent. Rockhill tells us that while journeying in the south-east he wished to buy a horse from a native herder. The man replied that he was willing to sell but that his wife was away and that he could not accept any offer, however advantageous, without her sanction. And this was in a district where men will hardly submit to the authority of chiefs.

(To be continued.)