

## Mission Field.

[From the S.P.G. Mission Field for April.]

JAPAN.—[CONTINUED].

"Their insular position seems to have affected the character of the people of Awaji, and to have imparted to them a certain pride in their country which could not exist so strongly in a mainland district. They hold together almost as a separate people, with common aims and common opinions. Country and town folk alike are citizens of Awaji, and their own newspaper is read throughout the island. The place is, however, backward and far behind its neighbors in Shikoku or on the mainland. The customs of the people are freely acknowledged by themselves to be yet in many respects uncivilised, and the better classes seem gladly to welcome the foreigner who comes, they hope, to teach and raise the lower classes. I believe that if anyone were to go to live with them, and make Awaji his home, his influence would be greatly increased by the local patriotism. He would be looked upon as an Awaji man—as one of themselves—and if in addition to this he owed his right to live there to his becoming a 'yatoi,' or employe in their school, I believe he would start with considerable advantages not to be enjoyed by missionaries in the more modernised centres of Japan.

"The power of the Buddhists seems weak. I have never found anyone to speak well of them. Their schools are feeble, and they belong to a sect which has long ceased to attract the educated classes. Rivalry, then, need not much be feared, and hostility on their part is almost impossible. I was informed by a 'woshi' (professional rough), who asked me to employ him as a preacher, that the priests often asked him to preach Christianity for them, showing that they relied rather on violence than force of argument in their conflict with the new faith. On one occasion only have I been publicly questioned by a Buddhist priest and his followers, and then they based their attack on the ground that Christianity makes a man disloyal and unpatriotic, because he does not worship Izanami and Izanagi (the reputed divine founders of Japan), or because he does not believe cats and dogs to be sacred.

"And little as the priests are to be feared for their learning, the police have assured me of instant protection if I am ever annoyed by their violence.

"But if in these respects Awaji offers a favorable field for Mission work, the amount of labour which has already been expended there is I venture to submit, a strong argument in favor, not merely of continuing the work begun, but of throwing into the place just that additional energy which by the grace of God may bring the crop to the ripeness of harvest.

"At present in the Island Mr. Foss's is almost a name to conjure

with. To be his friend is to ensure attention at every hotel, and to belong to 'Foss-San's Church' is looked upon as a sign of orthodoxy as a teacher. His journeys and preachings, begun many years ago when the foreigner as such was more sought after than at present, and the continuance from month to month of his visits have made him well known to many of the older people, and he has gained admittance to houses which would to-day be closed to other foreigners. What I desire to urge is that such influence as this, and such prestige, should be utilised by throwing without delay a strong force of workers into this place to bring to ripeness the harvest of fruit which has been raised all over the island by his labors. Persons who have listened to sermons without indifference now need to be led on to repentance and faith by regular and systematic teaching.

(To be continued.)

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