

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

THE MISSION HOME, SAN FRANCISCO.

The following is all we can make room for of a letter just received from Mr. C. A. Colman, formerly a Sabbath school teacher in the Central Presbyterian Church, Toronto:

MR. EDITOR—Seeing that, during the past year, we have been stirred up to more earnest zeal for our Master's cause among the heathen, and more particularly among the Chinese, by the presence of Dr. G. L. McKay, missionary from Formosa, I have thought your readers might be interested to know something of the work which is being done among that people on the Pacific Coast. To this end I have written the following about "The Mission Home," 933 Sacramento street, San Francisco, the work of the "Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church of the Pacific Coast." The "Home" is for Chinese women and girls.

On Tuesday, Nov 1st, Dr. G. L. McKay asked me to meet him at 933 Sacramento street. On my arrival there, I was admitted by Hooramah, a native of Persia, and assistant teacher at the "Home." She was converted in Oroomiah, Persia, under Dr. Perkins. Having a little money, her brother and herself decided to travel as teachers of the Gospel. In their travels they reached Philadelphia, U.S.A., when the brother, who was consumptive, was taken sick. Some friends sent them on to San Francisco, hoping that this climate would help the invalid, but he died soon after he came here. Hooramah herself was sick and very weary by this time, and came to the Home to rest. She liked the Home, its inmates, and its work so well, that she has never had any desire to leave it. The Matron of the Home says, "she is a most devoted Christian, and a great help in the work."

Miss M. Culbertson, the matron, has been in charge of the Home three years last June. She evidently delights in this "work and labour of love."

On entering the room, I found the matron and several other ladies, Dr. and Mrs. McKay with their little girl, Bella Kadi, and 24 Chinese women and girls and one baby assembled. They sang several hymns in Chinese and English. Dr. McKay addressed them in English, T'Sun interpreting into Cantonese. Mrs. McKay also spoke to them; but as she spoke in the Fokien dialect, Dr. McKay interpreted what she said into English, and T'Sun re-interpreted into Cantonese. This young girl also plays the organ at the Home. They repeated the Lord's Prayer in English and Chinese, and they sang "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." As we were about to leave, I asked a little girl sitting near me her name; she said Chun Fah. The following account of her is given in the report of the Home for this year: "Two years ago, one evening in December, little Chun Fah, then hardly six years old, was brought to the Home, her delicate form scarred and blackened by the daily beatings she had received from the woman who for one hundred and seventy-five dollars had made her her slave. Her case was brought to the notice of Mr. Hunter by a humane Chinaman, who was cognizant of the woman's cruelty, but did not wish his name revealed. Well do we remember her, as we first saw her sitting by the fire-side awaiting our return from church. As we drew near and spoke to her, she shrank affrighted away, tears and sobs being her only response. An hour later we saw her quietly sleeping on her pillow, the traces of tears yet on her face, her hand tightly clasping a bit of candy, that sweet comforter of childhood's sorrows. That blighted, desolate life is now rounding into one of happy joyousness, and is the light of our Home. Unable to speak a word of English then, she can now read, write, and speak more fluently than many of the older ones. She is very fond of Bible stories, and can repeat the account of 'Joseph and his brethren,' the 'Three Hebrew Children,' 'The Prodigal Son,' and many others quite accurately. For months she would not refer to her old life without a sad and tearful face, but now refers frequently to her deliverer, as the 'one good man who brings me to this good Home.'"

When we were leaving, Miss Culbertson gave us a hearty invitation to come again, and asked me to come some evening, which I did on Friday evening, Nov. 4th. After we had some conversation about the work among the Chinese, the matron called the girls into the sitting-room for evening worship. At my re-

quest they sang, "Simply Trusting Every day," and "He leadeth me," in English. The matron read Ex. xii. 14, and questioned them on the passage, after which she asked me to speak to them. I did so, illustrating the hard service of Satan, and the easy service of Jesus, by a story of a dog which was thrown into a lion's cage by its brutal owner, because it was beaten in a fight with another dog. The lion treated the dog kindly, and when the owner tried to coax the dog to come to him it would not, he used threats, but the dog clung closer to his new friend. Then each of them repeated a verse of Scripture, such as "God so loved the world," etc. (John iii. 16), "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke xviii. 13), "John 1. 6, 7, and P. x. 1. After prayer they bade us good night, and went up stairs, where the matron told me they have a prayer-meeting all by themselves. Messrs. Moody and Sankey visited the Home last winter, and Mr. Moody has left a memento of their visit in the shape of a number of hymn and tune books. On the fly-leaf of the one I used was written: "To Ah Yoke, with kind regards from her friend, D. L. Moody." The Report already quoted from gives the following description of the owner of this book: "One of the number, Ah Yoke, was brought in on the 3rd of May, at an hour when our Monthly Society was in session. We gave a brief description of her as she appeared that afternoon, clad in her suit of filthy rags, so filled with vermin as to render it necessary to destroy them; her hair uncombed; her face dirty and tear-stained; her voice tremulous with fear, as she looked upon the strange faces grouped about her, and piteously begged to 'go home.' Being assured by our interpreter that she had nothing to fear, she was conducted to the bath-room, and after a generous application of soap and water, and attired in a clean suit of clothes, she emerged from the chrysalis so transformed that one would hardly have recognized her as the same child. A dear Christian lady who was present was so pleased with her appearance, that she at once assumed her support. Ah Yoke is thirteen years old, modest and pretty; has a bright mind, is of studious habits, and gives promise of future usefulness. She is greatly attached to her benefactress, and writes her frequent letters of affection."

At a meeting of their S. School on Sabbath, Nov. 6, 2 p.m., Mr. Fong Doon, who is an elder, and organist in the Chinese Mission Church, 800 S-ockton street, gave them a Bible lesson, "The Passover." At the close of this meeting four of the youngest girls recited a piece entitled "Two Little Eyes," and all repeated the "Ten Commandments in verse."

Next day, Monday, was the regular monthly meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, and Dr. McKay was announced to speak to the ladies. We went there at two o'clock. After singing and prayer, the girls sang some hymns. Chun Fah repeated the parable of the "Prodigal Son" (Luke xv. 11-32) very correctly. Chin Mooie, the little blind girl, sang, "The Light of the world is Jesus," the others joining in the chorus, her voice was low and tremulous, but very sweet, and I know one pair of eyes that were not dry as she sang. Of this little blind singer the Report says: "Chin Mooie, our little blind one, has recently professed her faith in Christ, received baptism and admission to the church. She immediately began her Christian life by trying to bring her young companions to the same source from whence she receives light. A few days since, when she was sick, the younger ones gathered round her bed-side and engaged in prayer, singing and telling Bible stories. One related the incident of Abraham offering his son Isaac, another the sin of Adam and Eve, another of Noah and the ark—each bearing a part in the 'Cottage meeting.'"

Dr. McKay was then introduced to the meeting, and addressed [the ladies on the "hindrances," "helps," "difficulties" and "encouragements" which he had in Formosa. After he had spoken, the ladies, as he told me afterwards—for I could not stay till the close—had a hundred questions to ask, and kept him there till after five o'clock.

The "Mission Home" is supported by an annual grant from "The Woman's Board of Foreign Missions in New York," by "Auxiliaries" and "Bands" in churches and S. Schools; also by subscriptions from private individuals.

Some of the older girls earn a little by sewing for the Chinese fancy stores when they can; the means thus earned is placed to their credit, and expended as needed in supplying their wardrobe. The sum of \$41

was earned by them in this way in the year 1880. They also make and sell some very pretty articles of fancy work; bookmarks with the Chinese characters for "Holy Bible," suitable for a Family Bible; knitted wool slippers and other articles, which they keep for sale at the Home.

Nearly all the girls have American mammas—that is, some lady pays for the support of them at the Home. Any person, Sabbath school or Society, supporting one, may add their name to the one the girl already has. Until a girl has an American mamma she does not see the necessity of learning to write, but when she gets one she is all eagerness to learn, so that she may write her thanks and love to the lady who supports her. Yen Choi is an instance of this. She asked Miss Cable if she had not an American mamma too. On being told she had, she asked Miss Cable to write the name on a slate, and set vigorously to work copying it.

If this letter has caused any reader to think of what Jesus wants done among these who have not His Gospel, let him just now, from his heart, as he finishes reading this, say, with him who became the Apostle to the Gentiles, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?" And while we pray "Thy kingdom come," let us do what we can to hasten the coming.

San Francisco, Nov. 15, 1881. C. A. COLMAN.

THE NEW HYMN AND TUNE BOOK.

MR. EDITOR,—Another Precursor made the following extraordinary statement in regard to the plan of an uncut hymn and tune book: "That plan has been tried already in more than one denomination in Canada and the States, and in every case proved a complete failure." Surely he means in some cases only, or at least in every case that came under his own observation. My experience is also limited, but I have worshipped in many churches in the State of New York, and never yet saw a cut book, nor even the double arrangement he so graphically described, and which I also have seen but too often in Scotland and Canada. Never but twice in the States did I see the uncut book fail (and the uncut book was almost universal in the churches I refer to). The first time was when I was prevented from joining in a very familiar tune—"Olivet"—sung to the words to which it is wedded, "My faith looks up to Thee." The reason why the congregation was silenced was simply this, that the quartette seemed by their ostentatious style of singing not only to prefer being left to themselves, but also to make it almost impossible for anyone to make the attempt to join them. The second time was when the congregation were prevented from joining in the last hymn, which, of all the hymns, ought to be sung heartily by the whole congregation, because the tune at the top of the uncut page for some reason or other did not suit the choir.

I am quite willing to have light shed upon this whole subject by asking such ministers as Dr. Hall and Dr. Crosby, and our own Dr. James, of Hamilton (whose church in State street, Albany, I have often sung in, like the rest of the almost totally uncut congregation, from the uncut "Songs of the Church"), the following questions: "Does your congregation use a cut or an uncut book? If the latter, does it in your opinion hinder or help congregational singing?" But we can appeal to witnesses among ourselves who have been for years using the English Presbyterian Hymn Book, and a few who have for a time been using the Presbyterian Hymnal, both of which are uncut books.

The first cut book I ever had in my hands was the Scottish Psalmody. All honour to that precious book, and the stimulus it gave to psalmody in Scotland. Without staying to cast a lingering look at the Psalter of John Knox's time, which was an uncut book, and did not prove a complete failure, I am bound to acknowledge that, for certain reasons, a cut Psalter is likely to be in use for many years to come.

But what is the history of the Free Church Hymn Book, which followed at many years' distance the Scottish Psalmody? The first hymn book of that Church was bound up with the revised edition of the Scottish Psalmody, like the Scottish Hymnal, in the cut form. But in the face of nearly a ten-years' experience, the Free Church is now issuing an uncut Hymn Book like our own. But apart from precedents, what does reason say upon the subject? Reason seems to say that the ideal of hymnology is for every