

MISSION NOTES.

DEAR EDITOR,

Here is a fine picture of Woman's Work in the field Mrs. Currie has gone to. Missionary interest will always be based on missionary intelligence, and I am glad to see our INDEPENDENT serving that purpose.

Yours truly,

MONTREAL, Sept. 17, 1886.

E. M. HILL.

LETTER FROM MRS. STOVER, IN "LIFE AND LIGHT."

Tuesday, to-day; went to the village and rocks at half-past eight; home again at noon. This afternoon, though it is very hot, there is starched ironing to do. My oldest servant-boy does all of the ironing except the finest starched clothes, and to-day I have been teaching him to do up shirts and collars. Other work which every housewife understands, falls to my daily share, especially care for my child. All my mornings being spent away from home, all sewing, mending, studying, etc., are brought into the afternoon. You see there is little time for idleness or loneliness. Now a word of explanation. Chilume, the only large village near, is a mile away, down one hill and up another. The "rocks" are halfway between; and it is at these rocks where, every day from daylight till late in the afternoon, one can find from two to twelve or more women and girls at work pounding corn. Their staple article of diet being corn-meal mush, they are constantly at work preparing it. They first soak the corn in water to make it soft, and of course it sours, and the odor is not pleasant. They take this corn to the flat rocks, by a stream, and pound it with a wooden mallet till it is as fine as our wheat flour. It is hard work, I assure you, to pound and sift this meal, the only means they have of sifting being to shake it on a flat basket till it separates. So expert are they that all the coarse meal falls on one side and the fine on the other. They also pound and dry their mandioc (a root which they use a great deal). This is soaked in water until it has an abominable smell to us. Here I sit among these women, holding their babies or taking a hand in their work, and talking with them, learning their language and winning their hearts. They have not time to come to us, poor things; they are perfect slaves. When not pounding their meal, they are digging in their fields or gathering their crops. When they come home from working all day in the field in the scorching sun, with perhaps a child from one to three years of age on their back, on their way home they gather large loads of fagots, which they carry on their heads as they do all their burdens. No sooner do they reach their village than they must take a large gourd and trudge off to the brook, a half-mile away, for water, and then the mush and beans must be cooked and taken to their lords and masters, who have all day been sitting in their huts or on the greensward about the village, smoking their pipes, drinking their beer, and gossiping. Do you think their life one of ease? O my Christian sisters! you who are possessors of Christian homes, and are surrounded by loving, watchful husbands, children and friends, can you realize what life must be to these poor ignorant, over-burdened women—women who have heads, and backs, and hearts? Often my heart aches for them when I see how tired they look; and oh! how

I long to help them, and make them understand that there is One who carries all their burdens and feels all their griefs. I know I never could have realized what a blessed privilege it is to be born in a Christian land if I had not had this experience, and I wish I could help others to feel it in this measure. I visit from one to three villages daily, searching out the sick, and doing what I can for them. And yet my service seems so small and mean! It is not even "cups of cold water" which I can give—only a drop here and there. You will appreciate our great longing for an unmarried lady to come to us for this purpose; i. e., one who is not bound by family cares and responsibilities, but who can have her whole time to devote to visiting among the women, and studying the language. I have three boys whom I am training, and who are a great help to me. My great desire is to have two girls in my family to train. One little girl comes to me every day, but she is too young, only as she will be coming into it gradually. I want to get hold of some of the King's children; they not only seem superior in many ways, but their position in society being an influential one, we wish to get the gospel truths before them as soon as possible. I wish I could give you a pen-picture of our work and surroundings. We have many funny experiences; we laugh more often than we cry, which is conducive to health you know. It is evening, now, and as my husband and myself sit by our lamp, there are six dusky forms sitting at our feet, enjoying pictures and asking no end of questions. Our associates are Mr. and Mrs. Sanders. Our numbers are few, but God has said, "Where two or three are agreed as touching any matter," so we are sure of a blessing.

HUMOR.

The tendency of the writers of the present day is to over-estimate the occasions for humor. These are subjects in this life too grand, too noble and too unselfish for the flippant jest. There are attributes of the human heart—honor, virtue, love, religion and thoughts on death and eternity, awful and sacred, before which in reverent expectancy we wait, like Moses before the burning bush. The breaking of a public trust is a fearful sin in the sight of God and man, and whoever seizes it as a topic for humorous display, consciously or unconsciously lowers the standard of morality by substituting a thoughtless, mocking laugh for a strong feeling of solemn horror and revulsion.

Not long since, a well known humorist was announced to lecture. As he lingered in the ante-room of the crowded hall, a telegram informing him of the death of his mother-in-law was placed in his hands. Tender, loving, deep and fervent was the feeling between them, and he felt as though the angel of death had called his own dear mother. Staggering under the terrible blow, he informed the manager in a few hurried words of his bereavement and of the impossibility of his going upon the platform. In despair the manager spoke of the enthusiastic audience, even then stamping for their favorite; expostulated, even raged, but all in vain. At last, he urged the lecturer to at least make his own apology to the audience. With tear-dimmed eyes, barely seeing his way, he tottered to the foot-lights.

Before that vast audience he held the telegraphic message of death, and in a voice choked and quivering