

Church News.

The Mission Field.

A farewell meeting in connection with the departure of four lady missionaries to India, was held in the Free Assembly hall, Edinburgh.

DR. PENTECOST says: "If we should double our missionary force to-morrow, we should not be able to gather the ripe fruit that is waiting for us there." "Then triple it," is the sagacious comment of one of our smart Western contemporaries.

THE annual thank-offering of the Melville Church, Fergus, W.F.M.S., was held on Nov. 1st, and was felt to be a happy and profitable occasion. Miss Kerr, Pres. Sec., and Miss McWilliams, lately returned from India, addressed the meeting in a way fitted to deepen the thankful spirit, and awaken a more rayful interest in the heathen, the missionaries and their converts. All the exercises were heartily joined in, and the offering amounted to upwards of \$100.

THE monthly meeting, Toronto Auxiliary, Canadian McAll Association, was held on Thursday, 2nd inst. Mrs. Edward Blake, honorary president, occupied the chair and opened the meeting by reading 40th psalm and prayer. The treasurer's statement showed that \$228.24 had been gathered in since the midsummer instalment was sent to Paris. Miss Tilley, taking for her subject Matt. xiii. 24-30, gave an interesting and helpful Bible reading, followed by a short prayer. Hymn 633 having been sung, Mrs. VanWagner, President of the Auxiliary, Boston, U.S., gave a short address in which she told us that the interest in McAll work is increasing, but they need more workers and more money. One young lady she knows has volunteered to go, paying all her own expenses. Safe boarding houses at very low prices can be found for any one wishing to go in that way. Many interesting cases of conversion are reported, the result of the visits of the mission boat "Le Hon-Massagoe." Dr. McAll had actually commenced a fund to carry the work of the mission through those months in which they receive little or no money. Mons. Soltan has asked for \$5,000 to invest for this purpose, to be a "Memorial Fund." In the Boston Auxiliary two managers are elected from each church represented; these collect from their church, hold monthly meetings, and carry on the business. Only two public meetings are held during the season, between October and June. At these resident clergymen and others give addresses. Gentlemen are permitted to be present, thus gaining some honorary members. For the annual meeting talented men are brought from a distance. Miss Merttison read a circular letter informing us that Mr. Greig, chairman of the Paris Board and acting director since Dr. McAll's death, intends visiting the United States and Canada. He hopes to arrive in New York in January. As much as possible he will visit his constituents. Two or more Auxiliaries should arrange to hold union meetings, in order, as far as possible, to facilitate matters. After singing "God be With You Till We Meet Again!" Mrs. Christie closed the meeting with prayer.

Among the Lepers.

[Read at the first meeting of the Women's Hamilton Auxiliary of the Mission to Lepers in India and the East, 2nd November, 1893.]

THE occasion for the formation of this Association is the very earnest appeal which has been made to our sympathies, through the recent personal addresses and writings of Mr. Wellesley C. Bailey, on behalf of our suffering fellow creatures, cut off in their dire misfortune from free intercourse with society, driven from home and doomed to entire isolation, or at best to the companionship of the similarly afflicted, to drag out to its end a miserable existence, and, in but few exceptions, unsupported by the strengthening consolations of Christianity. Husbands driving forth their wives—wives their husbands—parents their children—children their parents—remorselessly—into this heritage of woe—this living death.—Caste broken—socially dead; and as Archdeacon

Wright sums up, "People whose only remaining duty is to perish off the face of the earth," and, as another describes their position—"Having no more a portion in aught that is done under the sun—condemned to watch the repulsive steps by which each of their doomed fellows passes to a loathsome death, knowing that by the same they too must pass." See description of Leper Settlement at Kalawa.

The disease leaves the leper utterly without hope in this world—irremediably so. In all the past ages no cure has been found for this terrible and mysterious malady, as one says "Science has given it up in despair." A malady which not only shuts the victim off—and properly so, however sad it is—from free intercourse with their healthy kind, but, alas! for human nature unconsoled by the charm of Christian charity—even renders them objects of loathing and abhorrence to their best beloved—as outcasts from God—stricken and afflicted by the tender and gracious Father of us all—so much so that in some places—Japan for instance—the very suspicion of the taint dooms the innocent victim to be hidden away—locked up in a room apart,—for life-long imprisonment, as a family disgrace, their happier fellow-beings viewing the leper as outside the pale of humanity, and to be described by a name so signifying. True in some exceptional cases instanced by Mr. Bailey and others, natural affection seems even to triumph over dread and abhorrence, but these exceptions are so rare as hardly to be noted, save as exceptions to prove that, after all, our common humanity will assert itself on occasions. Mr. Bailey, in the early days of his mission work, narrates an instance of this which is most touching. Visiting a boy of twelve years, who had been for two-thirds of his life a victim to the disease, he says,—“Having once looked in his face, one could scarcely forget it—so terribly distorted—yet with something gentle in it, and although made old by the malady you can see he is but a boy. ‘This,’ said the father, turning to the poor leprous child, ‘is my all, my very life; for him I live. They tell me I ought to keep him separate, and give him his food alone; but I cannot do it, and I never will.’ This devoted father had raised an altar to his ‘unknown God,’ ‘had given sheep and goats and many rupees that his poor child might be cured, but all in vain.’ Mr. Bailey read to them of the true God, and the interview between Jesus and the leper. Another time he told them to look to God and not to man, the father raised his eyes to heaven and said, ‘O God, recover my son; not my child, but thine.’ Mr. Bailey adds that he was deeply moved by the scene, and the prayer of his heart was, ‘O God, write their names in the Lamb’s Book of Life.’ A prayer that cannot but be echoed by every true, generous soul. But by far the greater weight of evidence is to the contrary, and to cite cases would only be to pile on the agony, and still further to harrow sensibilities already keenly aroused. The whole of the published records abound with proof of all that is stated. The grave itself is kinder than this! The name and memory of our beloved dead are cherished by us, even apart from our glorious hope beyond. To illustrate the melancholy fact that even death,—the great leveller,—does not avail in the case of the poor leper, to settle all accounts, in the eyes, at all events, of the society from which his misfortune casts him forth, the ban of society following even to the grave, Mr. Bailey, in the hearing of some of us, cited the case of a high caste Brahman who had contracted the disease, and was thrust forth to perish. Even when death came to his relief, his body was denied to it the funeral rites—cremation—looked upon as necessary to the caste to which he had belonged, and was left where it lay to corruption—the jackal and foul birds to dispose of, but, that for the public weal, the poor body had to be hidden from sight somehow, so one of the lowest caste—a very pariah of Indian life—dragged the festering and pestiferous body by a rope round the neck to a hole in the earth, away from human ken. By way of contrast,—at Chumba, a district of Himalayas, between Kashmir and Thibet,

where hundreds of human beings drag out a miserable life, a small group of huts were erected in 1875 ready for occupation; but through Hindoo prejudice the wretched sufferers held aloof, and for three months the home provided remained unoccupied till a high caste Brahman—a leper—applied for admission, to be followed by a great number of applicants, so much so, that it was found necessary to increase the accommodation. What a difference in comfort to them, repulsed by their own people, to find shelter and Christian kindness, loved and cared for in life and respected in death.

In some lands, the taint condemns the poor innocent victims, even to the death penalty, as it unfit to dwell on earth and breathe the common air, and, for even in disease life is sweet to those who have no hope beyond many poor things are thankful for the strength and opportunity to flee from the horror of so dying, for shelter and protection, to such refuges and asylums as may be within reach, as, in the days gone by, the fugitive Israelite fled from the avenger of blood to his city of refuge. And should not these refuges for the poor leper be so placed conveniently, and in sufficient numbers, and the way to them kept clear and open, that the weakest may reach them in their time of need? Happy if there they find the true Refuge and Strength—the very present help in need!

Though much may be done to ameliorate the sad bodily condition of those poor creatures, and thank God this is possible, and is being done by devoted men and women who are only hoping and praying that He may put it into the hearts of His stewards to give a little to help, out of their God-given abundance, and, above all, their prayers to the God of ways and means, that He would, in His own best way, provide the means, giving the will and the wisdom to distribute wisely the good things entrusted to His people's care, yet, beyond all this is the life from death that the Gospel brings to such as embrace it—to those who are dead while they live. As testified to by those who have worked among these unfortunates, even from the very countenance, the hopeless expression of despair is seen to give place before the dawn—the hope of the new and brighter day—the rising of the Sun of Righteousness over the dreary waste; over the domain of darkness the blessed light spreads, dispelling the gloomy night of despair until it has vanished, never more to return. Like Naaman when, at last giving heed to the man of God, he washed in Jordan and his flesh returned to him like the flesh of a little child—just think of it! After death's Jordan, to such as heed the Gospel call, there shall be no more leprosy of sin or flesh to cleave to them, and, although sown in corruption and dishonor and weakness, they shall be raised in incorruption and glory and power, to the fulness of the new and glorious life begun in them even here,—raised to the likeness of the Saviour, for they shall see Him as He is.

It is recorded by those who know, that there is a wondrous contrast in this respect between those lepers who have listened to and accepted the Gospel message of grace, and those whose souls remain in the darkness of unbelief—the very countenances of the individuals betray the difference between the saved and the perishing; and this is noticed, in a very marked degree, in communities, for instance, in those asylums, clean and comfortable though they be, under Government control, where religious Gospel teaching is not relied upon as a factor in the treatment, perhaps under the supervision of unchristianized natives, and in those superintended by devoted servants of the Friend and Saviour of the leper, who care, not only for the perishing body, but for the imperishable soul.

No doubt the existence of sickness and suffering and sorrow is traceable ultimately to sin, but,—and this is what should evoke our sympathies and appeal to them most strongly,—who among us shall dare to say of the poor leper, his case is immediately traceable to personal sin—that the judgment of the Almighty for sin is so manifest in his particular case? Who are we that have escaped while he is tormented? "Think