

Are they "Rice Christians?"

Something over a year ago the Church Missionary Society proposed to transfer its mission work in the Prefecture of Hing Hwa, China, to another missionary organization, partly for reasons of comity with respect to territory, and partly with a view to economy of funds. But the people in the district sent a petition asking that they might remain in the former connections, and promising to maintain their teachers and catechist themselves. Thereupon the Missionary Conference resolved to continue the connection. The Christian work in this district is thus practically self-supporting.

A missionary who has since visited Hing Hwa says: "I cannot but contrast the zeal and devotion of these people with the lukewarmness of too many in Christian lands. This district embraces over 6,000,000 of people. The superintendent of the catechists bears in his body the 'marks of the Lord Jesus' in the form of a scar inflicted by an older brother because he had embraced Christianity. He wears his scar with the more satisfaction from the fact that his brother finally died a Christian believer."

The missionary had the joy in one little community of receiving five to the fellowship of the Church. In another he was accorded a truly Christian reception with a feast. One woman brought six or seven others to the service as a result of her faithful labor, and twelve of her own family are adherents of the Church. In another village six women had been prepared for baptism by the faithful labors of the catechist's wife. A young girl of fifteen had been very active in influencing her friends to receive the truth. In another village a man, who had been treated in the mission hospital at Kang Chu, had made known

the glad message which he had received to relatives and neighbors, whereupon they sent a deputation begging that a teacher might be sent.

"These villagers," says the record, "show a liberality which is without a parallel in the history of missions. In all there are eleven Christians, none of them yet baptized, and all very poor. But last year they subscribed \$35 for the repair of their place of worship, and they have this year subscribed \$35 more for the support of a catechist, besides supplying him with rice. The schoolmaster in the village gave his whole stipend for the support of the catechist, and having in consequence insufficient means to supply his own wants, he sold his only field. Others of the little band have pawned their clothing to meet the sum promised." "It is sometimes said," writes the missionary, "that our converts are rice Christians. I should like to ask where in Christian England you would find a parallel to the above?"

At the little village of Kiang Sang, the missionary, arriving late, began after tea to examine candidates for baptism, and continued until ten o'clock, after which the superintendent of catechists continued his exhortations until midnight. In the morning the work of examination was continued, after which thirteen were accepted, all men from the neighboring mountains.

These are but incidents, but any Christian, comprehensive man, grouping them together as one entire picture, will not fail to see how the rays of light are thus breaking through the gloom of a great and populous district; how earnest is the faith and zeal of those here and there who have received the truth: in a word, how rich is the harvest which there waits to be gathered.

VI.—EDITORIAL NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

A Great Missionary Picture.

These are days of great Expositions. The industries of the world bring their

products together, the achievements of the age array their mightiest trophies, to astonish the eye and over-