

them, by the unexpected and undesired arrival of a gentleman whom, after employing in various stations at home, the Establishment has sent out to this distant land. The number of Scotchmen in the whole settlement is at present 800, of whom 500 are in and around the town. The large proportion of these, at least of those of them who would constitute the strength of a Christian congregation, are attached to the Free Church. When we consider how immensely the population is likely to grow, and how greatly the importance of the place is likely to be increased within the next ten years, we must be convinced that, notwithstanding the division which the procedure of the Establishment will for a time create, there is still encouragement, as well as necessity, for the Free Church to endeavour, by a minister of its own, to diffuse among the people a spirit of vital godliness.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

MADRAS.

Joy of missionaries in expectation of additional labourers—Favourable symptoms, and hindrances to the work—A debasing Hindoo feast, and its destructive influences—Visit to branch schools—Opposition and its effects—Cholera at Nellore—Death of teacher's wife.

Extract Letter—Rev. Mr. Johnston to Correspondent.

Madras, Sept. 13, 1850.—If Mr. Drummond, our new colleague, has not sailed before this letter reaches you, assure him of a hearty welcome from all the members of the mission. We hope to receive dear Rajah along with him. This aid, you know, will be most seasonable; for while our strength decreases, the work grows upon us from day to day. Mr. Hislop's arrival prevented Mr. Braidwood and myself from breaking down. Mr. Hislop labours daily in the higher classes of the Institution, and brings the word of God to bear closely on the consciences of many, who would otherwise be left without direct European influence. The European and native agents must be closely united in our work, and lend each other mutual aid. Symptoms of spiritual life appear in some of our classes; but, as usual, the native parents are taking alarm, and sudden removals may soon crush the tender buds of promise. To take the citadel of Hinduism is no easy task. When, after years of toil, a breach is made, and you are about to enter in, all your hopes vanish. A classfellow becomes informer against one who is inclined to Christianity; a parent is quick-sighted enough to discern a change in his son, who is become thoughtful and sedate, and has no relish for the daily rites of heathenism. Soon some idol feast must be celebrated "with great honour." A marriage takes place, or is suddenly concocted, and nameless arts are employed to counteract the force of Christian truth.

The convicted youth is removed, and after some weeks returns a withered and sapless branch.

On Monday last a most debasing feast was observed in this city, at which not a few of our pupils were forced to attend. At this season Vigneswaren, the god of learning, or belly-god, is especially honoured by parents and children, teachers and their scholars. The native teachers have the same interest in this feast as the parochial schoolmasters of Scotland used to have in Candlemas—one of the relics of Romish idolatry, whose priests and teachers knew well the art of turning all things into gold. Surely the customs of this people are vain! A belly-god of clay is purchased in the bazaar for a few pice. It is set up, and food richly prepared is placed before it with great honour, silence, and solemnity. The natural feelings of the parents for the future welfare of their offspring are deeply stirred, and the young are full of excitement, evening with joy the dainties of the coming feast. Then the feasting goes forward, and next day the boys in joyous bands carry, or drag on a little ear, their clay god to the neighbouring tank, or to the sea, and cast it from them with great delight. How painful to witness parental affection forging the fetters of idolatry, and fastening them on the minds of all the youths around us! Many of our pupils did not attend to this feast, and some of those who did, seemed ashamed of their connection with such worship; but they have no strength to resist their parents and their community. In the face of all these adverse influences, the Word of God is daily taught to hundreds, and a protest lifted up for the true God, which every year waxes louder and louder in the heart of this great heathen city. We walk by faith, and already triumph in faith.

My friend Mr. Braidwood, with Venkah and Ponnubalam, lately visited our branch schools at Chingleput and Conjeeveram, and found much cause for encouragement. Some of the natives who are provoked by the faithfulness of our teacher at Conjeeveram, had combined to injure him, and succeeded in scattering the girl's school. Mr. Braidwood's presence strengthened the teacher, and exposed the evil intentions of his adversaries. They still plot in secret, but an outward calm has been produced, and the fact of sixty heads of families, not one of whom has a child in our school, having all signed their names to a petition against the teacher, makes the parties fully known. This will help to keep them in check.

Twenty-six girls are again in attendance. All the other departments of the school were in a most healthy state of activity and progress.

The scourge of cholera has been very severe among the native population at Nellore. Our school there has suffered greatly by the removal of pupils. Our head teacher