

PALM ✻ BRANCH.

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AUGUST, 1898.

Prayer Subjects for August—African and Jewish Missions.

NO country, says Mrs. Gracey, has aroused the sympathy of Christian people, or inspired them to more devotion and sacrifice, than Africa. In no mission field has life been poured out so freely because of the dreadful and deathlike climate. The different races and the physical characteristics of the continent, and the various political influences at work have made missionary progress very difficult. The missionary has been forced to teach by object lessons, and with his other work has often been compelled to be carpenter, agriculturist and physician. They have had to contend with great difficulties with the languages. Throughout the country four hundred and thirty-eight languages and one hundred and fifty-three dialects are found, while into only eighty-seven of these have portions of the Bible been translated.

Slavery has been one of the greatest hindrances to the evangelization of Africa. The diamond anniversary of Queen Victoria was marked by many a unique and estimable deed, but none perhaps carried more significance than the decree that one and after that date slavery would not be recognized as having legal status in the vast region of Africa included in the territory of the Royal Niger Company; while on the other side of the continent the Sultan of Zanzibar has also declared that the legal status of slavery should no longer exist.

A company has set out from New York for Africa, under the auspices of the Phil-African League, to endeavor to inaugurate a movement for the liberation

of the negroes of Africa from the awful thralldom of slavery.

King Leopold, the sovereign of the Congo Free State, is making effort by all practical means to suppress the slave trade, and to diminish terrible wars and put an end to cannibalism and human sacrifices.

The Swedish Missionary Society, which has been in operation since 1886, has a great work on the Congo, a seminary for training native evangelists, and the largest press on the Congo. It publishes a small paper of twelve pages called *The Messenger of Peace*, which has been doing great good for the past six years. This is an illustrated paper, and books are being printed in the native language.

Among the signs of progress we note that a missionary society has been organized in Uganda among native women, called "The Gleaners' Union." At the first meeting a map showing the religious differences of the world in different colors was spread on the floor, and the women sat on mats and were intensely interested. They were mostly pleased with the idea of a chain of missions across the continent, and promised to pray earnestly that the light might spread from shore to shore of the great continent. At the second meeting held for these women one of them brought a gift, she said, for God. It was a parcel containing three hundred and thirty shells (shells or cowries are the money of Central Africa). These were all picked and evenly strung together, and were enough to support a teacher for a month.

It is indeed progress, and most encouraging, for we cannot but remember that the condition of African women is the most degraded on the face of the earth, and has appealed for many years to the sympathy of the Christian world.

Hundreds of missionaries have given their lives for the redemption of Africa, and only a few weeks ago came fearful tidings of several more, both men and women, who had fallen victims to the superstition and cruelty of the natives.

"Africa is to be won by her own sons and daughters, and for this end we are laboring"

Thanks are still due to our kind missionaries who keep us informed on matters of interest in their own fields of labor.

We are glad, too, of news from Newfoundland, a corner of the earth from which we hear far too seldom. We invite more communication, which will surely increase our interest.