

whatever facts might enter into the intelligent direction of missionary effort for their evangelization. We had not long prosecuted inquiries in this direction when we became aware that an indeterminate number of aborigines were scattered throughout the entire region in question, and it soon became evident that anything like complete information concerning them was, by ordinary means, unattainable.

For the most part occupying either the higher and more inaccessible mountains, or else the low-lying hot lands along the Caribbean and Pacific coasts, they entered so little into the political and economic life of the countries that even the respective governments felt but a languid interest in them, and possessed but the vaguest information upon all the points of greatest interest to us. Such facts as were within governmental knowledge were cheerfully placed at our disposal, but these were too few and too indefinite for the basis of rightly-directed missionary effort.

In short, it became clear that only by means of laborious and expensive explorations could the data for such effort be obtained.

It may be well to remind the reader that the entire population of the five republics approximates 3,250,000, distributed as follows: Costa Rica, 243,205; Guatemala, 1,471,025; Honduras, 431,917; Nicaragua, 312,845; Salvador, 777,895. Speaking broadly, this population is composed of pure whites, inconsiderable in number, but of great influence; pure Indians, and mestizos, or people of mixed white and Indian blood, and these are in numerical majority over both the other classes. In religion, the whites and mestizos are Roman Catholic.

It will be seen that there are many contrasts between the Indians of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Salvador, and those of Guatemala and Honduras. The tribes of the last-named republics are strong in numbers and are spread over vast spaces of mountain and forest. In the former the tribes are small, and many languages must be learned before they can be thoroughly evangelized. In the latter, one language will often give access to from ten thousand to seventy-five thousand souls.

While the Churches of America have been sending missionaries into the remotest parts of the world, they have strangely neglected this tempting and destitute field at their very doors. And this is plain disregard of the spirit of the Divine plan of campaign of missions given by the Lord Himself in Acts i. 8, which contemplates the moving out by concentric circles from strategic centers, and by—implication at least—forbids the overpassing of unevangelized regions.

JAMAICA AND HAYTI.

Christianity in Jamaica has progressed steadily through the workers of the Church of Scotland, the English Baptists, the English Presbyterians, London Missionary Society, Wesleyans, Free Methodists, Moravians, and others. The contrast between the negroes of this island and those in the Republic of Hayti is a striking testimony to the value of missions. A century ago the two islands were equal in social and intellectual degradation, and efforts at evangelization awakened only ridicule. In Hayti, where papal and pagan superstition have prevailed, we still find commercial bankruptcy, physical squalor, moral rottenness, intellectual stagnation, and spiritual deadness. In Jamaica, on the other hand, though there are still many thousands in need of the Gospel, even a casual visitor will notice the signs of prosperity, education, and religious life. The progress of Christianity in Jamaica answers, once for all, the query, "Can the African be Christianized?"

ALASKA.*

THE District of Alaska comprises from one-fifth to one-sixth of the entire area of the United States. It is a region abounding in mineral resources. The largest gold mine and quartz mill on earth are in Alaska. It has mines of gold, silver, coal, zinc, copper, iron and other metals, also crude petroleum. It has fisheries equal to any in the world, and it has also the largest reserved lumber district in the United States.

The white population is still very small, although there is an influx of from two to three thousand white miners this spring going to the gold mines upon Cooke's Inlet and the Upper Yukou River. The great bulk of its population is comprised of four families of natives. Occupying the Arctic, Behring Sea, and North Pacific Ocean coasts of Alaska is the Eskimo family; along the great interior rivers is a branch of the Athabasca Indians; in the extreme south-eastern corner of the country are ten tribes of Thlinget people. These three families are barbarians and heathen. Along the Aleutian Islands are the Aleuts, the fourth class of native people; these have been brought under Russian civilization.

The North Pacific Coast of Alaska has, through the influence of the Japan current, a mild winter climate, but north of the Pacific Coast line of Alaska the thermometer reaches 75° below zero every winter. As to communication with the outside world, mail is received in south-east Alaska twice a month. From Sitka to Unalaska there is a monthly mail during the summer. North of the Aleutian Islands there is no regular mail communication at all; teachers, missionaries and traders of that region receive but one mail a year.

The first evangelical services on the North Pacific Coast were held in 1857, at Fort Simpson, B.C., by Mr. William Duncan, a lay missionary of the Church Missionary Society of London. From the commencement on the British Coast the work extended into Alaska; in 1876 four native Christian young men from the Wesleyan Methodist Mission in charge of the Rev. T. Crosby, of Fort Simpson, found work at Fort Wrangel, Alaska, and when the Sabbath came, refraining from work, as they had been taught at the mission, they held a prayer and conference meeting. This was the beginning of religious teaching in Alaska, and led to the establishment of mission stations throughout Alaska by the different denominations of the United States. At present the Presbyterian Missionary Society has nine stations, seven churches, and about nine hundred native communicants. The Episcopal Society has three main stations and some two thousand baptized natives. The Swedes have three churches with sixty or seventy native communicants. The Methodist Woman's Home Missionary Society has a very successful mission school at Unalaska. The Moravians have four principal stations and two churches with perhaps one hundred communicants. The Woman's Baptist Home Missionary Society has a large mission school at Kadiak. The Roman Catholics have one in south-east Alaska, and four upon the lower waters of the Yukon River.

There is no section of the mission field where the same amount of work has secured greater results in the conversion of souls and the elevation of the native population than in Alaska.—*Sheldon Jackson, D.D.*

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