

Mission Field.

MR. GEORGE G. McLAREN, who has been Principal of the Birtle Indian School for the past five years, is resigning his position to the great regret of the Foreign Mission Committee.

In a letter from Formosa to Rev. R. P. Mackay, Mr. Gauld, the Presbyterian missionary, says:—"We are well, and are still enjoying life in Formosa very much. It is a source of great encouragement and spiritual assistance to meet some of these native Christians who are passing on to perfection."

MR. PETER HUNTER, an intelligent Indian trained in the Bird Tail Sioux Mission in Manitoba, has been appointed to the charge of the Pipestone mission, from which Mr. Thomas Shield was obliged, by ill health, to retire some time ago. It has long been Mr. Hunter's wish to study for the ministry.

FIVE students from the Free and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland have arrived in the North-west to assist in Home Mission work. All are supported by the Students' Missionary Societies of their respective colleges. Two of them have expressed their intention of remaining a year in the mission field and taking the next summer session in Manitoba College. A pleasant feature was the reception tendered to those of them who were able to remain for a day in Winnipeg by the Woman's Home Missionary Society of Augustin church at the house of the Hon. Chief Justice Taylor.

THE Rev. George Flett, of Okanase, our veteran Indian missionary, has reached the patriarchal age of 77 years, but is still active and vigorous enough to carry on his work, at least, on the home reserve. He has had, until recently, charge of the Rolling River and Lizard Point reserves in addition to his work at Okanase. But the recent appointment of Mr. W. J. Wright to Rolling River has relieved him of one of his outlying fields, and arrangements are on foot to make other provision for Lizard Point so that Mr. Flett may have nothing to do but to care for Okanase, when it is hoped he may still be able for several years to minister to an attached people, nearly every one of whom he has brought out from Paganism.

AMONG THE LEPEERS.

The Work of the Mission to Lepers in India and the East, in behalf of the Untainted Children of Lepers.

THERE exists some diversity of opinion as to whether leprosy can be classified as a hereditary disease. Nearly all the authorities coincide that if it is hereditary, it is so to a very slight degree that heredity as a feature of the disease is hardly worth considering.

It is extremely difficult to obtain very accurate information regarding family histories; but there are so many instances of healthy children of leprosy parents, and, vice versa, so many cases of leprosy children of healthy parents, that it does seem as if it could not be viewed as a strictly hereditary disease; and this accords with the deliverance on this point of the Government commission on leprosy, after a most careful and exhaustive consideration of the subject.

There is no record of any congenital instance of the disease, nor does it often develop in early infancy.

All this tends to make the rescue of untainted children of leper parents, a most hopeful branch of the mission's work. Very much may be done in their behalf to save them from contracting the disease, by separating them at an early age from their leprous surroundings, and from the great risk, if not the inevitable consequences. For although not considered a very infective, or contagious disease, under ordinary and reasonable precautions against contamination, proved by the impunity with which the missionaries freely handle the lepers, attending, when necessary, to the dressing of open wounds, and such like, yet there

seems to be very little doubt that the disease is infectious and contagious to a certain extent, and certainly so in some types and stages of the disease.

Danger exists from inoculation from open sores, either through direct contact, or in a less degree, through infected clothing, contaminated tanks and wells, etc., or even, it has been stated, through the medium of flies, carrying the virus from the open sore on the leper, to the, perhaps casual, scratch or wound on the healthy subject.

The disease is endemic, depending, no doubt, in a great measure, for its development, on habits of life, diet, and predisposition to its attack, probably not very well understood. Unsanitary habits and conditions all conduce to the risk of contracting the disease.

The danger the children incur, in the free intercourse between the leper parent and his child, in their highly leprous surroundings, will be readily understood. It must be a very pitiful sight to see a sweet healthy babe in the arms, or at the breast of a leprous mother. Or the children at their play, with all the usual risks of childhood of scratch or abrasion, and the more than ordinary danger to them.

An extract from a letter of Dr. Fry, from Neypoor, well illustrates the danger children incur by free intermingling with lepers. He writes: "One of the saddest cases which have come under our notice, is that of a child whose mother is one of the cook-women of the home. The mother had often been warned not to allow her child to play about among the lepers, but she disregarded the warning, and the result is, the child appears to have contracted the disease. This is another proof of the danger of allowing the healthy children of lepers to remain living with their leper parents, and it is kindness in every way to provide homes for such children, when the parents can see them at stated intervals."

While there is the greatest danger in allowing the children to remain with their leper parents, the chances are greatly in favour of the children, who are separated before the disease has taken hold of them, escaping the danger altogether. This has been fully demonstrated by results, especially those of the Almorah Orphanage, where out of many children rescued from leper parents, in only one the disease had afterwards developed. The commissioners ground their suggestion, on the segregation of the children, upon the experience of this orphanage.

The Mission, in all their asylums, provide for and strictly enforce the complete segregation of the sexes. The law cannot be invoked to enforce such a separation. There is no law enacted against the marrying of lepers, nor, of course, for the forcible separation of children from their leper parents. But it has been found to be quite possible, in most cases, especially in those brought under Christian influence, by reason and Christian kindness, to persuade and bring the parents to see how very desirable segregation is for the children, and to make them willing to give them over to the care of the Mission.

Although living entirely separate from their parents, the rescued children are still permitted to see them and be visited by them at stated intervals and under certain wise restrictions, so that parents and children are not altogether deprived of all intercourse with one another. It may be sad to think that there can never more be perfect freedom in their intercourse, but what will not a parent suffer and endure for the sake of his child, and he must come to see, sooner or later, that it is for the good of his child that the manifestation of his heart-true affection should be kept under such wise restraints, and, for the sake of his child, he will not shrink from the sacrifice? It is all sad as can be and part of his melancholy lot, but surely his heart will be cheered by the thought that he can rise superior to self and make the sacrifice that is to conduce to the well-being of his child.

But, besides the physical benefit to the children brought under the tender care of the Mission, the Mission Home becomes a nursery for the living temple of God. There is the momentous consideration of the rescue

of the children from heathenism through the every-day supervision, teaching and influence of the Mission; their being brought to the knowledge of the truth—the saving truth—as it is in Jesus, to become, in their turn, missionaries, or aids to missionaries, and the results more than justify the hope; their becoming personally, moreover, living epistles of the Gospel, through their Christianized and regenerated lives, to their own kith and kin still in heathenism, are surely great objects, to say the least, to add to the aims for their bodily well-being.

It is a grand opportunity, this, to train up children in the way they should go, that when they are old they may not depart from it; an opportunity to the Mission and to come nearer home, to all auxiliaries, and each individual worker for the Mission.

All the indications of success are of the most hopeful kind, and the results, hitherto, most encouraging. The Mission, in this branch of its work, is leading no forlorn hope. The Master, who so tenderly loves the little ones, is, without doubt, leading the way. Let none hang back through indifference or want of courage from following in His blessed footsteps.

In the annual report for 1892, under the heading of Almora, we find:—"In the year 1863 the first attempt was made to save the untainted children of lepers by removing them from their parents (with, of course, the consent of their parents). This being the first attempt of the kind in India, so far as we know, and from that time to the present it has been carried on with singular success. Of more than thirty children thus rescued only one has become a leper, and that one is now a teacher at a leper asylum in the Plains. Of him the lady superintendent says: 'He is a great comfort to me.'"

"Some have married, have healthy children, and continue healthy themselves, others are doing well in mission service. One who knows them well writes of some of them:—'The most interesting thing, to my mind, with respect to these girls, is their wonderful development into true, earnest Christians, pure-minded, refined women, and most efficient mission workers.'"

In the same annual report, under the heading Neypoor, it is stated:—"The Children's Home was begun in March, 1891, and then there were seven children on the roll, while now (1892) there are twenty, *ten being the healthy children of lepers.*"

Mr. Byers writes from Asansol: "I want to build a place for the children. Two have come and more are coming—untainted children with their leprous parents."

Mr. Hahn writes from Lohardagga, of the happy settlement in life of various young people who had been separated from their leprous parents: "Three boys have left the home recently, one doing work as a teacher, and the other learning carpentering, the third being a groom at present. 'I am so glad,' he says, 'that I am able thus to provide for them all. One of the girls, who married, is a Bible woman. I am so happy that none of them show, as yet, any traces of leprosy.'"

Writing after Christmas, Mrs. Hahn tells how happily the children kept it, and dwells on their comfort and progress.

From Mandalay, the Rev. A. H. Bestall writes: "I have three bonnie children, and have the consent of the parents to care for them in our mission school. They are nicely clad, well fed and cared for, and will do well, I believe. I let them visit their leper parents occasionally, and the teacher goes with them." And again from the same report (1892): "Friends have undertaken to support the three children already mentioned, and Mr. Bestall writes of them: 'They are some of the very nicest we have in school, and will, I feel sure, turn out bright useful women, if only they remain free from the awful disease. I watch them constantly.'"

The report from Parulia states: The children, too, burdened with their sins, come to Mr. Hoffman, wishing to live for the Saviour, and to confess their sins to God and to those they have injured. It is hoped that many of them will make good catechists some day; they seem made for it."

Mr. Hoffman continues: "Last month