

MISSION FIELD.

FOREIGN MISSIONS

REV. JONATHAN GOLFORTH.

The following interesting letter has been read by the Secretary of the F.M.C. Mr. Golforth, the pioneer missionary in North Honan, is a man of immense energy and a hope that nothing can destroy. He says his health is much better since he dropped some work—and now only preaches two hours a day in the chapel, besides the two Sabbath services and the week night prayer-meeting. He adds "Besides the preaching I have to hold private conversation with enquirers and others which takes up much time, but that is what we are here for. We are not to be pitied but to be envied. We can understand Paul's joy when he was preaching in regions where others had never been. I have no hesitation in saying that the joy found in leading heathen souls to Jesus is the highest experienced this side of heaven."

Mr. Golforth relates the following interesting incident, which is one of many "I must tell you of an interesting enquirer who came yesterday from the Provincial Capital 100 miles away. He said that six or seven years ago a colporteur was selling books in the street of that hostile city Kai Feng Fu, and that he stood listening to what the bookseller had to say, when an old man, a scholar, a B.A., came up, and becoming enraged, scattered the books over the street. The colporteur seemed frightened and made no resistance, nor attempt to collect the books, but left the city. He (the enquirer) gathered several of the books and took them home and read them and believed in them. Seeing that the books had been printed in Hankow, he had about decided to go to that city and find out more about this wondrous doctrine, when two teachers from the American Presbyterian Mission in Shantung came to Kai Feng Fu to preach. He invited them to his house and they spent the whole night talking about this great salvation. He forthwith destroyed his household gods and began to worship the true God. Now his son and daughter and her husband have become believers, and they with several neighbors meet regularly in his house for the study of the Scriptures and prayer."

That is interesting. Another illustration of the unexpected ways in which the Holy Spirit works, "He bloweth where He listeth." This incident had a special interest to our missionaries, inasmuch as Mr. Golforth and Dr. J. Frazer Smith nine years ago visited the city of Kai Feng Fu and were refused admittance—armed men standing at the gates to keep the foreign devils out. They cannot keep out the light of the sun however. Jesus Christ has at last made for Himself a name and place in that city that knew not the day of its visitation. The whole Chinese Empire has been seeking to shut out the light, but in vain. It seems as if the dawn were lightening into midday, and that as in India, European arms were about to break down the barriers. Should the Church be less eager to secure a footing for the Kingdom of God than Germans or Russians are to plant their national flags?

But the reader will be interested in knowing what became of the other parties in the scene. Of the colporteur nothing is known, but what of the scholar who scattered the books? He has been for three years a raving madman, he ordinarily goes about the streets of the city, or in his paroxysm of madness, has torn the skin of his own body until he is a mass of sores. He about twenty years ago composed a book against Christianity so vile that the British Minister last year had it suppressed and the plates destroyed. This man who published such unmentionable blasphemies about Christ and His religion, now goes about the city a raving maniac, bedaubing his own body with such filth as he finds in the street. When he becomes dangerously violent the magistrate binds him with chains.

The enquirer, Mr. Chu, who brought this report believes this man's insanity to be a direct visitation from Heaven, for his great crime—and which of us are prepared to dispute this conviction?

Mr. Golforth reports great satisfaction and comfort in the Christian Chinese whom the Lord is raising up to help—and who are animated by an ardent zeal for the salvation of others. The work in Chang Fe is more encouraging than at any time since the work was begun two years ago. There are many in the city and surrounding villages who are convinced that their idols are vanities but fear the consequences of open confession. "It is not easy to confess that here. It means great opposition from friends and neighbors and in some cases the rending of limbs. To day an old lady of 80's joined us. Her son threatened her life with an axe, if she did not abandon Jesus, yet she stole away and has been in the woman's class for several days. Mrs. Golforth, assisted by Mrs. Meritt and Miss Fyke, are teaching a class of women gathered from different parts. Seven of them are accepted as Catechumens."

The reader should remember that when the missionaries are satisfied the enquirers have accepted Christ, they are enrolled as

Catechumens but not received into full membership until they are tested and instructed for a year. This makes the increase of membership slower, but makes the foundation of the future church more secure. This class was to remain ten days for instruction and then return to their respective homes. One of these women is eighty-one years old and makes a clear confession of faith in the love of Jesus for her soul. In her case the years' delay is not carried out, because of her age. She and three men were baptized on the 30th Oct. The Church should pray for the persecuted converts.

LOOKS INTO BOOKS.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. By S. R. Driver, D.D. Sixth Edition, revised and enlarged pp. 577. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1897. Price \$2.50 net.

Since 1891 when the first edition of this great work was published it has become unquestionably in America and Britain, the most influential book in establishing the Wollhausen theory of the origin and growth of the Old Testament Scriptures. Before that time Western readers got snatches of German criticism in works such as Robertson Smith's "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church," but there was no complete presentation of the problem as affected the separate books of the Old Covenant. This was furnished in Dr. Driver's admirable "Introduction."

That it served a decided want is evident from the fact that between September 1891 and October 1897 there have appeared five editions and two reprints; beside a translation into German (1896) by Prof. J. W. Rothstein of Halle. The sixth edition, just published, is from new plates, the whole having been reset, so that now, with the corrections and additions necessary to a first edition made, the work is as nearly perfect as possible. There are many new references to recent literature in this edition; here and there several fresh footnotes, occasionally a few verbal changes, and improved indexes; but, on the other hand, no radical revision of views. In his preface Dr. Driver says, "In all its main conclusions the present edition does not differ from the preceding ones, and the text is, as a rule, unchanged. I have, however, revised the work throughout, and I have, in particular, (1) introduced from time to time verbal, and even occasionally, slight material improvements into the text, (2) brought the bibliographical notices as far as possible, up to date; (3) given some account of the principal critical views which have been propounded, with reference to various parts of the Old Testament, since 1891" (pp. xiv. xv).

One is struck in reading the new Preface, with his attempt to buttress the conclusions of his book by cataloguing those who agree with him. For example, after commenting on the progress which critical opinion has made during recent years especially in Britain and America, he says, "So far as the Anglican Church is concerned, the essay of Mr. (now Canon) Gore in *Lux Mundi* was one of the first indications of a change of front on the part of those who were not, so to say, critics by profession. . . . Scotland, which twenty years ago renounced Prof. W. Robertson Smith from his chair, is now amongst the foremost to honor those upon whom it has devolved to carry on and develop his teaching" (pp. xv. xvi). He quotes also Professor A. F. Kirkpatrick of Cambridge, Prof. Sanday of Oxford and others as on his side—all of whom have agonized their acceptance of the critical position. Hence he concludes: "The consensus of so many acute and able scholars, of different countries, of different communions, trained independently in different schools, and approaching the subject with different theological and intellectual prepossessions, cannot, as some would have us believe, rest upon illusion: it can rest only upon the fact that, whatever margin of uncertainty there may be, within which, as explained above, critics differ, there is an area within which their conclusions are deduced, by sound and legitimate logical processes, from a groundwork of solid fact" (p. xvii).

While this portion of his Preface is thus apologetic, it has its justification in the fact that Dr. Driver's book from beginning to end evinces thorough and cautious scholarship. Its author shows the utmost familiarity not only with the facts and language of the Old Testament itself, but with the whole range of literature upon the subject. The work is a monument of patience and erudition. Even archæology is most elaborately considered in the discussion of every point upon which it has any special bearing. Nothing of real importance seems to have evaded Dr. Driver's critical eye.

Two instances discussed in this new edition render it of peculiar interest to the present writer: (1) his persistent refusal (p. 429) to accept the Elhiu-speeches in Job as genuine, which is in direct opposition to the latest phase of German criticism, as illustrated by