

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA.

(Christian Standard.)

On our way from Beyrout, learning that our steamer would stay several hours at Smyrna, we began to enquire how we might be able to search out our little church, of whose members we know the name of only one. But when we arrived at port, at 4 p. m., April 22, we found that several of our brethren had left their work and spent the day watching for us. They had heard, through Bro. Shishmanian, of our coming, and were there ready to greet us. As our steamer would not leave for twenty-four hours, our party arranged for a trip to Ephesus on Saturday morning by rail, to return at 3 p. m.; but, great as was our desire to wander among the gorgeous ruins of her temples and palaces, we had a still greater interest in, and duty towards, the living temples of God we found in Smyrna, and we had no hesitation in declining the trip to Ephesus for the sake of the little church in Smyrna. Bro. G. T. Smith, who was to leave at 11 for Athens, accompanied us during the morning. Under the guidance of Bro. Hagop Marashlian, a young man who speaks English tolerably well, and several others, we went to the homes of our brethren to see how they live, as well as to talk with them concerning their religious life. We were everywhere most cordially received. They are all poor, dependent on their labor for a living. Their houses were generally comfortably but not elegantly furnished, but they were all clean and neat. We found them to be, to all appearance, good, pious people, and generally intelligent in the Scriptures. For intellectuality and social ease and grace, and earnest piety, we believe they compare favorably with the average of our American churches. For education and general intelligence, they are not on so high a plane, as they have not our reading facilities. But in their understanding of the gospel, and their devotion to it, they are superior to most of our churches. They remind me of our western churches of forty years ago. Bro. Shishmanian has evidently given them thorough instruction and drill. They meet much opposition—not from Mohammedans, who do not feel in danger of any inroads on their people at present—but from professed Christians—the Greeks and the missionaries of the A. B. C. F. M., who are disposed to regard all who do not labor in connection with them as intruders. The theological controversies that were rife in our western States forty and fifty years ago are rife here now, and you can hear, any hour, the same old arguments, objections and misrepresentations. And these disciples are well equipped for the discussion. They understand the Scriptures, and delight to wield the sword of the Spirit. They meet regularly to break bread, and to exhort each other to love and good works. Garabod Tavitian, their leader and teacher, presides at their meetings and sometimes preaches, but he is growing old, and has his daily labor to perform. Younger men are rising up to speak the Word of life; but the largest amount of preaching is done day by day, by all the members as they find opportunity to talk with their friends and neighbors. When they have sown seed awhile and watched its growth long enough, they send to Bro. Shishmanian, telling him that another harvest is ready, and asking him to come and reap. He had been there just a week or two before our arrival, and baptized nine persons. Their present number is thirty-eight.

But they labor under serious difficulties. They have no place to meet. They had a house rented that answered very well, but one of their bitter opponents paid more rent and got it away from them, and now they meet in a small hall in Bro. Tavitian's house, and even here they are not free from annoyance. Their Greek neighbors sometimes assault the house. We saw in the transom of the

hall door several broken panes of glass, the result of attacks on the house during worship. They are compelled to meet with closed doors, and they tell me they have to sing in low tones—so low as not to be heard in the street, or they would be assaulted anew. The hall, moreover, is not suitable for meetings in the winter season. There is great need for a house that can be used for a church and a school. The American Board has here a neat house of worship and excellent school buildings. So have the Armenians. So have the Greeks. The Armenians and the Greeks are wealthy, and the American Board lavishes funds on its missions in Turkey. Our brethren do not seek to compete with them; but they greatly desire to have a place of worship to which they can invite the people, and a school through which they can reach the children. I went with them to look at a house and lot which can be bought for about \$1,750. It is well located, and is large enough for church and school purposes. It would require probably \$500 to put it in repair. I asked them how much of this they could raise at home for this purpose. After consultation they said, one hundred and fifty dollars. That may look like a small sum. But, in view of the difficulty of rising above the pressure of poverty in this country the sum represents a great deal. I asked them which they would rather have, a house or a preacher. They answered, "Both." "But if you can not get both?" "Then give us a house," they all said; "and by the time we get it ready for use, perhaps some of our brethren who have gone to America to study will be ready to come back to preach in it."

In the afternoon not less than sixteen came to the boat and lingered until the boat was about to start. They were filled with delight at our visit. The rest of our company returning from Ephesus, there were seven of us to entertain them, and to the rest of the passengers it was quite a novelty to witness the enthusiasm of affection between us and these strangers. But the final farewell had to be spoken, and it was spoken in tears. They wondered if there ever would be another feast-day like this until they reached heaven. One aged sister who came to me to say good-bye, took me by the hand affectionately, and while the tears filled her eyes, as she knew no word to speak, pointed with glad finger to heaven. I understood her, and joined her in pointing to the heavenly home, where only we could expect to meet again. As they took boat for the shore, they continued waving farewells to us until the steamer bore us out of the beautiful bay and out of sight, and we sent up to heaven a silent prayer for this little flock of humble and earnest believers, that the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls would nourish, protect and guide them. We commend the Smyrna church to the sympathy and love and aid of our brethren in the United States.

I. E.

Athens, May 2, 1887.

Correspondence.

It is now more than a year since I wrote my last letter to THE CHRISTIAN, and I suppose your readers have concluded that I have given you up. I have not forgotten you, but have not had much time for writing, which is my only reason for discontinuing my correspondence. I cannot go over the whole of the time and recall all the items which might interest you, but there are some that are worthy of notice. In my last I made reference to the Hazards and the work they were doing amongst the Maories at Wairoa and Rotorua. These places are at the centre of a volcanic region and have been visited for many years by hundreds of tourists and others, attracted thither by the beauty and grandeur of the beautiful natural features of the district. To see these and spend a short holiday with the Hazards, I, accompanied by Mrs. Bagnall, paid a visit to

what is called the "Wonderland of New Zealand," in April of last year. It would take a volume to tell of the strange and startling sights on every hand; large lakes and small lakes, hot and cold, boiling springs and geysers, mountains and valleys, call for admiration and inspire awe. On the top of one mountain 2,000 feet high, to which I climbed, nine beautiful lakes could be seen, as well as numerous columns of steam issuing from the boiling springs and geysers. This district was inhabited almost entirely by Maories, who reaped a golden harvest from the constant stream of visitors during the summer months, by charging them for the privilege of travelling through the district and seeing the sights.

I was interested in the work being done by the school, and the temperance movement which had been started by the Snows, whom I also mentioned in my last, and it was most discouraging to see that the good work was steadily opposed and often successfully neutralized by the hotel and its surroundings. We attended church on two Sundays in the Snow Temperance Hall. The services were conducted by a native preacher, but the attendance of natives was small and much indifference was displayed by many of the natives in the matter of attending church. On one occasion there was a number of tourists present, three of whom were clergymen. Each of the latter was asked to speak to the congregation, and notwithstanding that the services of an able interpreter were offered to interpret what they said to the Maories, would you believe it, not one would say a word. I was astonished and so were the assembled natives, who had to content themselves with a short address from their own preacher. This place had been for forty years the scene of missionary labors, but I cannot say that the results, as seen during a fortnight's observation, were other than disappointing. In fact, very much so. It would almost seem that the spirit of John Barleycorn can overcome the spirit of truth, as there is no doubt there has been a great falling off in the spiritual life of the natives since the advent of rum shops. This is a question which those engaged in missionary work to heathen nations should give attention to. Archdeacon Farrar says that since the English have been in India they have made one hundred drunkards for one Christian. What a dreadful record.

Seven weeks after we left this interesting region it was the scene of the most appalling catastrophe which has occurred in this country since its occupation by the Maories. On the night of the 9th of June last a terrific volcanic outbreak took place at Mount Tarawera, which, when I saw it, looked like a huge block of stone. Volcanic mud and dust were showered over the face of the country for miles around the mountain, falling in great quantities on the parts near and overwhelming several native settlements. One village was covered with thirty feet of debris and all the inhabitants perished. At Wairoa all the houses were destroyed and many persons killed, Mr. Hazard and four children amongst the number; Mrs. Hazard and two daughters escaping almost miraculously. The total killed by the eruption was 108 Maories and six Europeans. For weeks a succession of earth tremors was felt and all the subterranean forces seemed to be excessively active. By degrees these have died away and now the springs and geysers have resumed their usual character. The stream of sight-seers has again commenced, but the number is small compared with what it was before the outbreak. The natives view the occurrence as a visitation from God and a punishment for their wickedness. It has had a sobering effect upon the survivors, which it is hoped will continue to the end of their days.

On our return to Auckland, we attended the annual meeting of the churches of the Auckland district. The meeting was well attended but the