

THE MISSION FIELD.

CHINA.

We are permitted to publish the following extracts from letters of the Rev. W. S. Sayres (the first and last written to a relative, the other to a member of the Foreign Committee), the first that have been received from him at his new station:

CHING KIANG, Nov. 3d., 1884.—We arrived here on the night of Saturday, October 25th. We are getting settled in our new home. The house stands on the top of a hill, about fifteen minutes' walk from the river, and outside the settlement and city. We have a good view for many miles; the air is pure, and, I suppose, will be cold enough for us in the winter. We are all alone and isolated. There are no other houses of any kind near us. Quite near, however, is a Chinese fort on the summit of a hill, and the soldiers come out every fair day to drill on a piece of level ground between us and the settlement. There are very few foreigners there; there are English and American consuls, whose houses can be seen very plainly from our windows. It is real country about us—grass and paths and hills away off as far as one can see. The great city walls are down beneath us, with their turrets and towers and flags. Off in the distance is the river studded with sails; several pagodas are also visible and temples here and there all over the landscape.

Ching Kiang has an immense population; there are "the city within the walls," "the Tartar city," and "the city outside the walls." The grand canal which runs from Hangchow to near Peking crosses the great river just below the city. . . . I hope in a few days to be settled and at work preaching. It appears to me very strongly to see these thousands and thousands of heathen who know nothing at all about God and a future life. To save one of their souls ought to be a reward great enough to repay one for any suffering undergone for that end. I cannot understand how it is that Christians at home can stay comfortably at home, while the heathen go to death unenlightened.

JAPAN.

(From report of the Rev. Zu Soong-Yen, for the year ending June 30th, 1884.)

KONG WAN, July 11th, 1884.—Services were held on the morning and afternoon of each Sunday, in the church at Kong Wan. We always have a very good congregation on Sundays, the attendance ranging from one hundred to one hundred and fifty, including all the scholars of two boys' and one girls' schools; on the especial occasions or the native festival days we have more people to attend the Service. The Sunday-school is still gathered in the church and commenced just one hour before the afternoon Service. I divided the pupils and formed them into several classes in accordance with their various studies; at the close of the school a selected piece of short and interesting story was talked to the children by the teachers in turns; the highest class studies the New Testament and the others the Catechisms on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the poetry of the Scriptures. Meetings for

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prayer, which are one of the best means of bringing the people in order that we may teach them the true doctrine, were held on Monday and Thursday evenings of each week at my house and at those of our different Christian Families. The meetings were well attended by our own people, some of the heathen neighbors also coming to hear the preachings, because in the daytime they were busy. I often find such gatherings form a good and sound introduction of the Gospel truth, and help to make the name of CHRIST known to them.

BAPTISMS.—During the past year seven adults and four infants were received into the Church by Holy Baptism. One of them was the mother of a student in St. John's College. I baptized her on her sick bed; she died shortly after. There are now several other persons who are also attending divine Service and preparing themselves for Baptism. I expect them to be received into the Church by next fall. I have good hope that they all will be true followers of CHRIST. May God bless and guide them in the right path and help them to be real, earnest Christians.

AFRICA.

We find the following in *The Methodist Herald*, of November 12th last. The paper is published at Freetown, Sierra Leone.

CAPE MOUNT MISSION.—On the first page of this issue will be found a report of the Cape Mount Mission reprinted from *THE SPIRIT OF MISSIONS* for October, which we believe will be read with interest by many.

This Mission was established in 1878 by Bishop C. Clifton Penick of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. On his retirement from the field, on account of ill-health, in the early part of this year, Rev. G. W. Gibson, a citizen of Liberia, was appointed superintendent of the Mission.

Mr. Gibson is aiming to realize what has been one of his long-cherished desires, viz.: to see the establishment of an institution properly equipped for the thorough training of men for missionary work among the interior tribes. There is no doubt that the peculiar character of that work requires men not only of special gifts and endowments, but of careful

and special training.

The same number of the paper mentioned reproduces an article about the same Mission or station from *The African Repository*, a portion of which we give. It must not be supposed, however, that *only* the Vey tribe is reached by this work.

THE VEY TRIBE.—The Veyes, among whom this Mission [at Cape Mount] is established, are, in many respects, the most interesting tribe on the African coast. They are distinguished as the only tribe on the continent of Africa who has invented an alphabet. In our early school-days it used to be supposed that all the alphabets of the world sprang from one source—the Phœnician. We now know, that the Perso-Assyrian cuneiform alphabet is quite independent, as also the Sanscrit alphabet, whatever its original form; while the Tamil, Burmese, Siamese have also an aspect wholly primitive. To these must be added the Vey.

A German of the name of Koelle, a Missionary of the Church Missionary Society, who spent five years at Sierra Leone and the neighborhood coast, mastered the Vey language sufficiently to write a small grammar of it. He also prepared several tracts in the Vey language and character, which were published by the Society in London. A specimen of this character, which is syllabic, may be seen in Wilson's "Western Africa." Professor Blyden found that the most ordinary Vey man would readily read Koelle's tracts. Correspondence is now held in this language throughout the Vey country. In their ability to hold epistolary communication in their own language, written in letters of their own invention, this tribe forms an interesting exception to the tribes on the continent, and, indeed, they belong to the very few exceptions among all the tribes of mankind.

If the originality of this people is not weakened, but encouraged and assisted by a process of foreign culture, we may yet see great things from them. If without extraneous aid, they discovered their present ingenious method of writing their own language, they will be sure, in time, to improve that language by sensible accretions and assimilations, if unconstrained cultivation allows the development of natural and normal results.

The Church Guardian

A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER.

NON-PARTISAN!

INDEPENDENT

Is published every Wednesday in the interests of the Church of England in Canada, and in Rupert's Land and the North-West, with correspondents in the different Dioceses.

OFFICE,

190 St. James St., Montreal.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

(Postage in Canada and U. S. free.)

ONE YEAR, (strictly in advance), . . . \$1.50
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