

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

FORMOSA.

PAPER READ BEFORE THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—WESTERN SECTION—AT HAMILTON, 13TH APRIL, 1886, BY MRS. J. THORBURN, OTTAWA.

(Continued from last week.)

Before proceeding to speak of the aboriginal tribes whose homes are in these mountains, it may be as well, for a clearer understanding of the matter, to state that the inhabitants of Formosa are divided into three classes: 1st. The Chinese, who occupy the western side; 2nd, the subjugated aborigines, called "Sek-hoan" (i.e., ripe barbarians), in the north, and "Pe-po-hoan" in the south; and 3rd, the "Chi-hoan" (i.e., green barbarians), the native tribes who still remain in their savage state.

I shall describe them in reverse order:

1st. In the wild mountainous region of which I have been speaking, dwell the "Chi-hoan." They are closely allied to the Malay races, and are described by the old writers as of "slender shape, olive complexion, wearing long hair, tattooing their skins and blackening their teeth with betel. They are good-natured, faithful, honest and frank among themselves, but excessively vindictive when provoked." They are said to have no regular government. Candidus says, "their chief title to command seems to be the number of heads taken in battle; these are as much prized as gold and precious stones among Europeans, and are carefully preserved." Mr. Mackay says it is the greatest act of bravery for a man to return to his tribe with a human head, and tells of a pressing invitation he had on one occasion to go to one of their houses, and see the head of a Chinese, which was on exhibition there! According to Candidus they have no word to express master or servant, yet are not wanting in respect especially to old age. They have no written language. Their religion is the rudest form of Paganism, the few rites which they have are presided over by priestesses. Their houses, which are neat and comparatively clean, are built on elevated ground, that they may observe the approach of an enemy. They are broken up into numerous petty tribes, who are perpetually fighting amongst themselves. Very much as they were in the old Dutch times, when Candidus wrote, are they now—still wild and fierce, and yet possessing some noble traits of character. Mr. Mackay has visited and preached to some of these savages, in places so remote that even the idols of the Chinese had not reached them.

The 2nd class are the "Sek-hoan," or "Pe-po-hoan." These, though still retaining most of their old customs and characteristics, have, nevertheless, submitted to Chinese rule, have shaved their heads in token of submission, and live in small villages in the Chinese part of the island, each village presided over by a resident Chinese Mandarin. They live in the greatest simplicity, "practising no art save the tilling of the soil, and that in its rudest form" (Thompson). Their houses and everything about them are made of bamboo, which grows in great abundance in Formosa. Even their bridges are constructed of this useful article—bamboo, bamboo, everywhere. Well might Marco Polo say "of a surety there is no such country for sticks as Cathay." There are many mission stations among these people in the south, but in connection with our Church only one, "Sin kang," as Mr. Mackay is decidedly of opinion that the work should be principally carried on among the Chinese, who are the advancing race. The aborigines are fast dying out—the Chinese are opening up the island, inducing hundreds to come from the mainland, and will exist when the scattered tribes are no more. He says, "I thank God that our work is among the Chinese."

The 3rd class are the Chinese. They occupy the western portion of the island, and have emigrated from the continent. They speak the Amoy dialect, and are, in all respects, like their countrymen of the mainland. Shrewd—amounting to cunning—apathetic to religious feeling, loving gain above all things, they are nevertheless thrifty, industrious, patient and persevering, and have in them qualities which, under Christian influences, would make them a great people.

In religion they are chiefly Buddhists. The portion of the island which they occupy is exceedingly fertile, and has been called "the granary of the maritime provinces of China." Rice, tea, sugar, and indigo are largely cultivated, and it is one of the few

countries in the world producing camphor. The plant *anralia papyrifera*, from the pith of which is made so-called "rice paper" is much grown here. Mr. Fortune says, "it is a most striking looking plant, and highly ornamental. The fine broad palmate leaves which crown the stem have a noble appearance."

The Chinese portion of the island was, till 1876, divided into the districts of Komalan, Tamsui, Chang-hua, Kia-i, Tai-wan and Feng-shan, but the districts of Komalan and Tamsui have been abolished, and a department of North Formosa established with three dependent magistracies (Ency. Brit.)

Formosa has always been a turbulent region. The official classes have a proverb, "every three years an outbreak, every five a rebellion," but under the enlightened and energetic rule of the present governor, King-Jih-Chiang, the state of the country seems to be improving. It is to his zeal, and desire to bring in European improvements, that the island owes the erection of a telegraph from Tae-wan-foo to Takoa, the proposal to build a railroad to connect the north and south, and the importation of English miners to work the coal mines at Kelung, which before had been worked in the primitive Chinese style.

The great want of the island seems to be good harbours. Owing to physical causes the once fine harbour of Tai-wan-foo is filling up with sand; indeed, constant changes are going on all along the west coast. Tamsui and Keelung are now its best harbours.

"Tai-wan-foo, the capital, is a fortified city of 70,000 inhabitants, the walls enclose a space of about five miles round, planted to a great extent with fields and gardens, and still shewing traces of the ancient Dutch occupation, in the ruins of Fort Provincia, and in the extensive parks shaded with fine old trees or groves of tall bamboo. The suburbs are intersected by a multitude of green lanes, which run between walls of cactus, interspersed with the brilliant flowers of the wild fuchsia and clusters of major convolvulus" (Thompson). "The streets in the city are long and straight, with awnings for seven or eight months in the year, to protect them from the heat of the sun, lined with store-houses and elegant shops, where silks, porcelain and other wares are so arranged as to give them the appearance of so many charming galleries, and would be delightful to walk in, if less crowded and better paved." (Malte Brun.) The houses, however, are generally poor. The schools of Tai-wan-foo are in high repute.

MISSIONS.

Towards this beautiful island, which I have attempted to describe, the eyes of the English Presbyterian missionaries began to turn in 1863. This Church has for some years a successful mission at Swatow and Amoy, and in 1865 they determined to extend their operations to Formosa, and establish there a medical mission under the care of Dr. J. L. Maxwell, who had held the position of resident physician to the General Hospital at Birmingham. He established himself first at Tai-wan-foo, but formidable opposition obliged him to abandon that place, and remove to Takoa, where he erected an hospital, etc. In December, 1867, the mission was reinforced by the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie. The year 1868 was one of sore trial. One of the chapels was levelled to the ground, one of the catechists brutally murdered, and another put into prison. Dr. Maxwell wrote, "It is very, very dark at present." But the Lord brought light out of darkness. In spite of these persecutions, the work continued to advance, and in 1869 Dr. Maxwell returned to Tai-wan-foo and opened another hospital. In 1871 Dr. Matthew Dickson went out as medical missionary, and soon after, Rev. W. Campbell. Mr. and Mrs. Ritchie continued at Takoa for eight years, when "they joined their fellow-labourers at Tai-wan-foo, as it was deemed advisable to concentrate the strength of the mission and make the capital its centre. There with renewed devotedness they laboured on together until in Sept. last (1879), Mr. Ritchie was taken from his service on earth to be forever with the Lord" (E. P. Magazine). Mrs. Ritchie has decided to remain, and continue her work among the women of Formosa.

One important work of Dr. Maxwell must not be forgotten, his translation of the Bible into the Roman Colloquial, which has benefited not only his own mission but ours also. Dr. Maxwell returned to England in 187-, and is now residing in London.

In Oct. 1875, Mr. Ritchie visited all our stations in

company with Mr. Mackay, who speaks of his visit with great delight. Mr. Mackay then returned with him to the south, visited the stations there, and afterwards attended the first Christian conference ever held in Formosa, which met at Tai-wan-foo.

The work of the English Presbyterian mission is principally among the aborigines.

CANADIAN MISSION.

In the year 1864 the Canada Presbyterian Church began to awake to some sense of her responsibility in the work of Foreign Missions. The feeling gained ground in the next few years, and at the General Assembly in 1871, Mr. G. L. Mackay offered for the foreign mission field, and it was decided to send him to China. Having been ordained to his work, he left Canada in Oct. 1871, and arrived in China sometime in Jan. 1872. He had not decided at that time precisely what field he would occupy, but after visiting Formosa, and consulting with the brethren of the English Presbyterian Mission there, he decided to remain on that island. The English Presbyterian Church was already in the south, the Canada Presbyterian Church would occupy the north, and so, divide the land. Accordingly Mr. Mackay proceeded in March 1872 to Tamsui, or Ho-be, a treaty port in the north, which place he took for his headquarters. He found the whole of north Formosa a dark unbroken field. In two months he was able, with a "stammering tongue," to make known Jesus Christ to the perishing souls around him, and on 22nd Sept. (1872) preached for the first time in Chinese. Then he went out into the country, and proclaimed the name of Jesus in every village for miles around. He was followed by crowds, which soon roused the anger of the officials and the literati, and they gathered about him for discussion. Mr. Mackay determined to fight the battle out with them. He studied night after night, went forth in the day to meet them, and in a few months silenced them. In those first months he suffered much persecution, soldiers dogged his steps and watched him—foul placards were posted up, his life threatened, his work obstructed in every conceivable way, but "none of these things moved him, neither counted he his life dear unto himself," with undaunted courage he went forward in the name of the Lord. He travelled over every part of North Formosa, barefooted, over mountains and hills, across plains and valleys, and soon the fruits of his labours began to appear.

Mr. Mackay's method has been to erect small chapels at convenient spots. Attached to each chapel is a "prophet's chamber," where the helper can live, or where the missionary can rest or sleep.

As soon as possible, Mr. Mackay attached to himself young men whom he trained as helpers, and whom he placed in charge of the chapels. This has been an exceedingly valuable part of his work, as without their assistance services could not be kept up at the different stations.

One characteristic of Mr. Mackay's work must be particularly noted, and cannot be too highly commended, i.e., the great care he exercises in the admission of candidates for baptism. These are kept under probation for three or four years. No doubt the number might have been largely increased, had Mr. Mackay's aim been merely to make a show for the admiration of the Church in Canada, but he says, "when my bones are mingled with the dust, my successors will never have to say that I planted a Church in North Formosa, and paid no attention to the foundation."

His work has been simply marvellous. Seldom has any one man sustained such arduous missionary labours, for it must be remembered that for more than two years he was entirely alone. We are lost in amazement when we read the record of what he has accomplished, and that too, when, and during the eight years of his residence in Formosa, he has been ill about six days in every seven. His simple faith—his burning zeal—his undaunted courage—his untiring energy and his unselfish giving up of himself to the Master's service, are known to all the churches, and need no praise from me.

(To be continued.)

"RESTLESSNESS."

It is delightful to know that there is none in the east. It is sorrowful and ominous to know that there is much in the west. I can testify as follows as to one Presbytery: There are in it about eighteen settled ministers. Nine of these were called from other