

The letters from the Foreign Field have been so encouraging. "What shall we render to the Lord for all His kindness shown."

A small band of sisters in Boundary Creek, West Co., were organized into an Aid Society last Thanksgiving day. We are glad to know they have lived through this hard winter. May the "Sun of Righteousness" rise over their efforts to spread His name abroad. Pres., Mrs. L. A. Willmot.

In Nova Scotia, Windsor reports this month a life member. In Cape Breton a Mission Band of fourteen members have been organized at Gaborons. Mrs. Daniel McGilvary, and Mrs. Ruth Hardy are the leaders. Sydney has also a band—the "Light Bearers."

From Lunenburg County, our Secretary writes of two new Societies. One at Laconia, and one at Lapland. The former with nine members, and the latter with eleven.

These places are outlying sections of Bridgewater Church.

Young People's Department.

MISSION BAND LESSON.

MADAGASCAR.

What is Madagascar?

The third largest island in the world.

Where is this island?

In the Indian Ocean, about 260 miles east of Africa.

How large is it?

Nearly 1000 miles long and about 350 miles broad.

How many people does it contain?

From 3,000,000 to 5,000,000.

What are these people called?

The Malagasy, because they are descended from the Malays. They are divided into various tribes who all speak nearly the same language.

Describe the climate of Madagascar?

In the low country near the coast it is hot and damp, causing many dangerous fevers, but among the mountains in the centre of the island, it is cool and pleasant.

Were the natives heathens?

While they worshipped idols, and believed in witchcraft and other superstitions, they had some idea of a great Ruler over all.

Had they any buildings for worship?

They had no temples, or priests, no books or written language until the arrival of Christian missionaries.

Who first tried to convert these people?

Roman Catholics from France and Portugal.

Were they welcomed to Madagascar?

No. They were feared and hated, and at last driven from the island.

What society came next?

The London Missionary Society in 1817 sent two missionaries with their wives and children, but in less than six months all of them had died of the coast fever except one man, Mr. Jones, who had to leave the country to save his life.

Did they try again?

In 1820 Mr. Jones went back to Madagascar, and began a school in the centre of the island. He was soon followed by other missionaries.

Who was king of Madagascar at this time?

Radama I, a friend of the English people but not a Christian himself.

Why did he wish the missionaries to teach his people?

So that his army might contain as brave soldiers as the British army.

What other request did he make?

That the boys and young men of his island might be taught English trades as well as the new religion.

How did the mission schools succeed?

They met with great encouragement for ten years. It was quite the fashion to attend them, so young and old, rich and poor, sought to be admitted as pupils.

State the results of ten years' work?

Thirty-two schools with more than 4,000 scholars; the language reduced to writing, and text-books prepared; the translation of the Bible begun, and a printing-press brought from England.

What sad event took place in 1828?

King Radama died very suddenly, at the age of 36 years, and the mission schools lost their best friend.

Who became ruler of Madagascar?

One of the king's heathen wives named Ranavalona, who proclaimed that the idols had foretold that she was to be queen.

How did she gain the throne?

By killing all other heirs, and bribing the chief officers of the kingdom to stand by her.

Tell about the day she was crowned queen?

She stood upon the sacred stone holding two idols in her hands, and said to them, "My fathers gave you to us! I shall put my whole trust in you—therefore support me."

How did she treat the missionaries?

They were hindered in their work by her directions, and all royal encouragement to the schools was withdrawn.

Did the good work stop entirely?

No. The translation of the Bible was pressed forward, and in March, 1839, 5,000 copies of the New Testament were distributed to the people.

Were they gladly received?

Yes, and read by great numbers of people all over the island.

When did persecution of the Christians begin?

In 1835, when the queen declared she would destroy Christianity in Madagascar if it cost the life of every Christian.

What commands did she issue?

That no one was to refuse to worship idols; that none were to be baptized or to take communion; that the Sabbath should not be kept holy, and that all who had become Christians should report their names to the palace within a month. Those who failed to do this, and were afterward accused by others would surely be put to death.

Did the Christians remain faithful?

Great numbers of them declared that they would rather die than give up Christ for idols.

Was the Bible a forbidden book?

Yes, but that did not prevent many Christians walking from 60 to 100 miles to buy a copy.

Did the missionaries continue preaching about Jesus?

Their churches were closed by order of the queen, but in dark caves or lonely mountains the Saviour's love was still proclaimed, and hundreds met for praise and prayer in these secret places.

What did Queen Ranavalona do next?

She commanded all missionaries to leave the island and all Bibles to be burned.