

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

LETTER FROM HONAN.

The Rev. Lachlan Cameron, Thamesford, has forwarded for publication the following letter received from Rev. Jonathan Goforth. Mr. Goforth makes feeling and sympathetic allusion to the dark shadow of bereavement that fell on the manse at Thamesford when Mrs. Cameron died. He says:—

The mail just received brings me word of your great loss. My heart filled with emotion as I read the story of one whom I esteemed as the noblest of women. Memory can carry me back to no home that had so great an influence on my life as the manse at Thamesford. I tenderly bear testimony that the one now laid to rest had the wonderful power to make the manse so home like to me. There was always such spontaneous kindness shown me. There was always such genuine interest manifested for my welfare that I was always helped and encouraged. The joyous greeting I received every visit and the tender farewell always made it a pleasure to return. Mrs. Goforth and I in talking about the homes where we would like to spend a few days on our return to Canada had placed the manse at Thamesford in the first rank.

I deeply feel that a dear friend has been taken. But still how far am I from realizing how much you and the children have lost—specially dear little Hannah. I have such affection for you all that I cannot help but feel that your loss is my loss. I weep with those who weep.

Our Father in kindness has removed the loved one. He is strong to afflict, but His compassions fail not.

Dr. Smith, Mr. Mackenzie and I are here at Hsin Chen hundreds come daily. We spend about six hours each day at the work, then return to our boat. I do about four hours of preaching a day; but it can hardly be called preaching. It is sometimes to all in the room and sometimes to a few who will come apart and sit with me. The Bible is the sword I always use. I find the Chinese have such a reverence for what is written that, for that reason alone, it is a decided advantage to use the Bible. We believe that the Spirit of God is with us and that not a few are convinced of the follies of idolatry. But, oh! how much we long for the Lord to make this people cry out "What must we do to be saved." I imagined while in Canada that the Chinese were eager listeners. It is not so. We stand amazed at their awful indifference. Preach with all the intensity you may upon the terrors of impending judgment, and perhaps some one will interrupt by asking "how old are you?" or some other such idle question. Our own puny power is manifest in the presence of the multitudes dead in sin. I plead for the praying ones of your flock to supplicate for God's omnipotence to be displayed here in the convincing and converting of souls.

Mr. Mackenzie and I the other day climbed a hill some miles from this place. From the summit we could see about 400 towns and villages, besides four cities. Thus spread out before our eyes were several times more souls than people Oxford County.

We have gained a decided triumph over the Chinese who plundered the premises at Chu Wang in the Chang Te Fu district. It is having a good effect on the people in this section; they respect us more. We go on to Wei hui Fu in a few days.

Mrs. Goforth and little Donald were well when I heard from them a few days ago. With tender sympathy, I am yours truly,

J. GOFORTH.

EAST AFRICA.

To-day Blantyre and Domasi are left with only the presence of a single Englishwoman at each station. The list of our African missionaries, including missionaries' wives, numbered eighteen in 1890. Now there are ten blanks, which will be only partially filled up by the reinforcing party now surely near their destination. The bereavements at Blantyre are so fresh in the mind of the Church that there is no need to dwell upon them here.

We learn by telegram the short, sad facts. But it is not only bare fact that we desire to know. We wish to hear how the little band who hold the fort at Blantyre are enduring this hour of darkness and of sorrow. The *Blantyre Supplement* for March contains the following, written just as the party left for change at home:—

"The mission just now is very short handed—was never more short handed, more undermanned. It will soon be a mission skeleton of three lonely house occupants at the three corners of the place.

"Blantyre will be a wreck of its former self, and at a lower ebb as regards men than it has ever been in the whole course of its history. Will people at home consider the case and stir themselves up. We have never lost heart nor hope, and we are still dreaming of kingdoms just a little on ahead. Let people think this of us, that we will manage, for all who trust us and our work, far better most probably, and certainly for far greater return, as large sums of money as they can possibly spare us. And let the right sort of men come out—not men who come for a post nor to make a living.

"We believe the Church at home is far too meagerly informed as to her missions. They do not know the missionaries, nor do they know the needs. Had the Church known her men, such as Dr. Bowie, Mr. Henderson, and Mr. Cleland, to any extent whatever—we can speak out now that they are dead; had she known their calibre, experience, power, she would have risen to help a work which had such divine guar-

antees. Had the Church further known our needs, I do not believe for one moment that we would have been left to reach the breaking point, and when the break came to find ourselves at the last possibilities of holding together at all. People call these things sad Providences; we call them sad mistakes. Sacrifices have ever priests who offer, and people for whom they are offered. Let the Church at home think if her sins as well as those of this people are not borne by willing sacrifices such as these.

"The minimum staff for the working of Blantyre is minister, doctor, teacher and sub-teacher, gardener, carpenter, lady teacher and sub-teacher. Where are Milnaji, Angoniland, and the River stations? Eight years ago we declared these five stations as minimum mission efficiency for the work in the Shire Highlands, and as adequate to lead the mission interest of the Church. We have been struggling to get out to Milnaji and Angoniland, and now we hold with difficulty the original two.

"It is not too much to ask for three new stations, as well as the efficient manning of the original stations (Blantyre and Domasi, with the sub-station Chirasilolo). The Committee of the Church has for years been doing its very best, making appeals all over the land, tugging at an altogether too heavy load. Will not the Church, i.e., each member of the Church, as far as this appeal flies, rise up and obey the command of the Lord to disciple all nations?

"You may say that the men died. Let me bear testimony to the fact that two of those who died were here by special funds, and that very great difficulties had to be overcome to get them at all. May I also say that the two medical men at present here are here on half-pay, and that however valuable Mr. Henderson was, he willingly served on the same principle?

"Does the Church know this, and if she does, why does she not waken up to do her duty?"

After Mr. Cleland's death Mr. Scott wrote: "The shock of his death was very great." He added with almost unconscious prophecy: "In the strain of a land like this, one almost feels at the time that others are going too." Others are going too. Yet in the midst of this work and strain he remains undaunted, and he summons us to a like courage. "Even the civilized courage of the modern gentleman, much more the Christian courage of the knights of the kingdom of heaven, is stirred by difficulty and death rather than by soft ease and easy life. Every true man who lays down his life is the seed-corn of sixty and a hundredfold. Let the heroic spirit, therefore, who reads this record of Mr. Cleland feel in it a call for self consecration, and let the Church feel roused to send him forth with zealous blessing." It seemed like an answer from the Church justifying this confidence to hear that "no fewer than five licentiates and one student almost ready for license have volunteered for Robert Cleland's place." When Mr. Scott speaks, he invariably strikes home. He invariably gives the right word, and a word too which goes far beyond the immediate occasion. To-day, from his lonely post, what he asks from the Church is no small or definite object which might be easily given, and then summarily dismissed from thought—it is fuller consecration, and a deeper sense of the privilege of working for God. And to each individual the message which he sends may be briefly summed up in the penetrating question of Christ's parable, "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?" How much.

A YEAR OF THE GORDON MEMORIAL MISSION.

We have a fully organized Presbyterian Church, with its session of 5 members and the moderator, and a deacons' court, with two additional members. There are 112 members in full communion, after removing one by certificate and nine under censure. We added on profession 18 new members—not one of whom had been baptized in infancy—and 4 by certificate. In addition to 14 babies, we baptized 11 (mostly young; men and 30 (mostly young) women. We have three schools in which English and the vernacular Zulu are taught, and four in which Zulu is the only medium; 302 names were inscribed in their rolls. Twenty nine boys were in the Manse Boys Home and over twenty girls were in the Zulu Girls Home under Miss Mary Lorimer's care, and an enquirer list of 100 souls may be added.

Native Church.—We have many congregations and but one church. The communion is not celebrated at the out-stations, nor is baptism administered except on special occasions. Of course this cannot go on for ever. The limit of accommodation must be reached some time. Some may think it not far off when the manse has to find accommodation for about sixty men and boys; and the Girls' Home for some eighty women, girls and babies! And several days' rations have to be provided for almost all of them.

It is a time of blessing, revival and strengthening. They feel themselves no longer lonely, helpless and few in number. They meet with others who have passed (or are passing) through difficulties as great as their own, and have conquered them too, and why should they not do the same? Being there for the purpose, and having neither household cares nor work to attend to, meetings can be held, and are held, with them at almost all hours, and an amount of teaching gone through which is very great, and unattainable in ordinary circumstances. The very sight of a congregation at a communion season is a mighty stimulus to Christian and heathen, to minister and congregant. To see the black-faced, white-tied elders, the reverent faces gleaming with happiness at the table (there were sixty-seven native members at last commu-

nion, the crowds beyond of baptized, and beyond these of heathen, sitting, standing, crowded together like bees—not a spare inch in any corner, and outside the door those who couldn't get in, or were compelled by babes to exclude themselves to see all this, and that, too, in the light of a very recent heathen past, and of a near coming eternity, stirs one's blood and enables one to pour out one's soul, in spite of foreign tongue, in a way that ordinarily is impossible.

All this would be lost if we were to have outside little churches. We would go then to one place and find not one communicant, to another and find a few, and so on, and our Sabbaths would be frittered away and our efforts diverted from the great work of every true missionary—that of preaching the gospel to the unconverted. We will go on, therefore, as long as we can find accommodation and food for them, and the people are willing to come.

Schools. We have had one new school added and a second supplied with a teacher during the year. The new one (Tugela River) was begun by one of our baptized girls, at her own instance, for her girl acquaintances and sisters; and now there are ten on her roll, and a spirit of enquiry has started among them. Girls are married so young that we have hardly a chance of getting such spontaneous work out of them, but we hope Nomaphi Makoba will be spared to go on for some years as heartily and successfully as she has begun, and that her example will induce other girls to do the same. We are very much in want of efficient teachers, and it is slow work training. Had we half-a-dozen suitable native young men teachers [we could speedily find employment for them. But teachers need a special talent, and a long course of education and training, and at the end of it all there waits only a miserable pittance of pay!

The proposal to build at Ekamba a small school-house by the people themselves has been carried into execution; and Hunter Gwambe (first of our Bible school, and afterwards working under Mr. Bruce at Maritzburg) has been in charge. We held an opening meeting, and dedicated the building to the service of God in teaching and preaching. A collection in cash and kind was taken (£3, 7s. 6d.) to put a wire fence round the two-acre plot. Isaac Zavukane is assisting Mr. George Bruce at Overton.

Mr. Wm. I. Mundell has the charge of the Mission Farm, and of its work and possessions, of its tenants, the arranging of sites for buildings, the land to be allotted for cultivation, the settlement of disputes, receiving of rents, etc. All natives being like cottars, need fields for cultivation and common for grazing. If left to their own devices, the whole farm of 3,000 acres would be covered over with small patches of maize or amabele, demanding the services of every boy to keep them from the ever-near herds of cattle and flocks of goats. It would be hopeless to get children to attend school then. They require to be so arranged that the fields for cultivation may be kept together, and the remainder utilized as the common pasture ground. It is a delicate task to manage.

He has also to show them the best methods of cropping: how to make one acre of his ground produce as much as two or three acres of theirs. He has always young men under his charge for the work. These he has taught to read in the evenings; and he is indefatigable in efforts to bring them to the cross of Christ, nor has his labour been in vain among them.

Mr. Heinrich Baasch has been in charge of the trades industrial department during the year. In last year's report I pointed out the unworkableness of the Government scheme, and another year's experience only confirms the judgment then given. It entails an expense for industrial training of over £100 a year beyond the amount of the Government grant.

I ought to mention the thriving Band of Hope, and the Temperance Society for older people. A very short stay in this country shows the missionary the need for a decided position with regard to the drink question, whether of European spirits or native beer. All the members of our staff are total abstainers in principle and practice. It is our earnest wish that every member of the Church should become a pledged abstainer also. Drink cannot here be said to slay its thousands or ruin their estate; but it does worse—it shuts their ears and hearts to the gospel, and so ruins them eternally. We are hoping to get a company of the Boys' Brigade formed soon, and in active work; and we are planning something corresponding for the girls.

The Medical Mission continues to do its quiet, steady, good work. I am struck with the number of instances in which the beginnings of an interest in divine things among those who have afterwards professed Christ date from their visits to the dispensary.

Perhaps the two cases which will interest the reader most are those of the doctor and his wife. She was stung on the head, face, neck, arms and hands by a great number of bees. The stings extracted were very many, and wearied the counters of them; but by God's goodness help was near, and a solution of carbonate of soda soon soothed the burning pain; and a day or two of flannel brought back the swollen features to their normal state.

The doctor had a snake pour a stream of poison directly into his eye at twelve or fifteen inches distance. The burning pain instantly began. In twenty seconds cold-water bathing was tried to wash out the poison, then a solution of soda, followed by a drop or two of olive-oil; and last of all, by an application of cold, thick, soured whole milk. For an hour the pain was excruciating, and in two and a-half hours it died away. It gradually got better in about a week, and now no mark or weakness remaining. In our excitement our snake friend made his escape.

"DON'T CARE TO EAT."

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