

MISSION FIELD.

The Gospel Propagation Society have put forth an urgent appeal endorsed by the Primate, for £2,000 a year to resume the Mission work which was stopped by King Thebaw in 1879. The father of Thebaw built at Mandalay, the capital of the country, a church, which was consecrated by Bishop Milman in 1873. The King completed it absolutely at his own cost, declining all offers of assistance, but making an exception only in favour of her Majesty, who, struck by the unwonted act of a heathen king building a Christian church, presented a font, which was placed on a slab of white marble specially selected by the King. The King built also schools and a missionary residence. The Rev. J. E. Marks and James A. Colbeck laboured with much success at Mandalay till the Mission came to an end from Thebaw's caprice. Now that on New Year's Day the royal proclamation added Burmah to the Queen's Empire the Bishop of Rangoon has telegraphed for three clergymen to resume the work in the Church, which has been used as a State lottery office, and the clergy house a Buddhist monastery. Apart from Upper Burmah itself, with a population of four millions and an area larger than Great Britain and Ireland, the Mission is of special importance, because the Irrawaddy is the natural highway to Western China, and was so used for hundreds of years till the Mahomedan outbreak in Yunnan in 1853, so that if the Church can win for Christ the newly acquired territory the heathenism of the vast empire of China will be influenced from a new point.

A correspondent of the *Missionary Herald* (American Board) writes from Japan that Buddhism is breaking down much faster than Christianity can take possession of the wrecks." Referring to the "Hill Country," he says:

"In a village where two of our Christian brethren and I were recently preaching, there were four priests in the audience, three of whom were bright and thoughtful young men."

After the meeting they remained to question the missionary. He received a fire of interrogations for nearly an hour; but when, in turn, he began to question them, they replied that they had not come for that purpose. He pressed them, however, to say whether they believed in God, or not, and one of them said: "We do not know whether there is a God or not." The old priest dissented from this admission, but the younger men silenced him. The missionary says this confession means "deserted temples and countless sheep without a shepherd." In one place the Buddhist temple was offered him to preach in, by the priest himself. He hesitated to do so, thinking the priest might not understand what he was doing, but one of the native Christians reassured him, saying he had preached in the temple, and that the priest knew what he was about. "He personally owns the

greater part of the temple, and says that he is getting along in years and cares very little what people think, and if there's anything better than what he has learned heretofore, he wants to know it." The missionary, therefore, preached in the "Temple of the Three Monkeys" to a large audience.

RANGOON.

The Diocese of Rangoon (to give rough figures) includes an area equal to that of Great Britain and Ireland, with a population of some three-and-a-half millions, of whom perhaps 20,000 may be Christians, including Europeans. This calculation does not include Upper Burmah, but only the present Diocese.

The most prominent branch of Mission work in Rangoon is that of which St. John's College is the centre. It includes also Mission work of a direct character, though its educational work is the primary feature. In the college there are usually between 400 and 500 boys (many of them far beyond boyhood) under education; of those about three-fourths are Burmans. The remaining fourth includes a Diocesan Orphanage for Burman boys, numbering about 50, and as many more day scholars, also of European descent. It is a great question if the educational work of this large College (it is the largest school in Burmah) is not unduly prominent, if looked at as a Missionary institution. Its present Principal is a "born schoolmaster" of the most remarkable type. Go where you will in Burmah you may meet his "boys"; seldom, alas! Christian by profession; but by no means wholly ignorant of Christianity. He has the wonderful gift of never forgetting them and the circumstances of their school career. Their attachment to him personally is great. He fairly argues that even if the school appears now to be too secular in its aim (and he does not ignore the question), no one can foretell its effect upon the future of Burmah. I am inclined to think and hope it may be most important; and certainly the argument of such a veteran in work demands attention. He does strive to give it a Missionary direction; and the daily services in the school-chapel, at which (though not at the Eucharist) all boarders may be present, are most stirring and hearty. May they bear the best fruit, though it be future! There is a Burman clergyman—a young man of high promise—in charge of much of the direct Mission work attaching to St. John's; he was educated in England, and finally at St. Augustine's, Canterbury. For English services he is decidedly efficient, and is of great help for vernacular work, which is more particularly his province. He lately married a Burmese lady, who would, for her gentle and earnest ways, be considered most winning and attractive by her English sisters in Christ. She speaks only Burmese at present, but understands a good deal of English, without being able yet to converse. She is likely to be a useful clergyman's wife, and already has been very helpful in

Mission work. There is a most ample field for woman's work in Burmah, both English and vernacular, in connection with our Missions. If we had such help a great extension could be given to the work in connection with the operations of the "Ladies' Association" of the S.P.G. Without it we are only working at half-power in Burmah—even if at that; and are not able to make the most that might be made of the liberal and useful grants of that Association. Nor is its business management so popular in the Diocese as it ought to be. A "Ladies' Committee" (unless guided or advised by trained Sisters, useful simply as the dispenser of grants-in-aid to the various local Missions; and it is difficult, if not impossible, to form local committees in minor stations, especially in subordination to a central committee. As a general principle, responsibility for all Mission work must be with the local Missionary, under the control of the Bishop of the Diocese.

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