

From Far Formosa.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is to be congratulated in having such a noble son as the Rev. George Leslie MacKay D.D. He is everyway an Apostolic Missionary. Loving the grand fundamental truths of the Gospel of the grace of God, drinking deeply into Christ Spirit, working in patient and assured hope, and achieving victories that may be ranked among the greatest won on the Foreign Mission field. To have proof of this one but needs to read "From Far Formosa". One of the most charming records of missionary enterprise that has issued from the press for many a day. It is second to none that we know. There is not a dull line in it. It is all life and movement. Those who have heard Dr. MacKay speak will at once recognize his voice in the book; his crisp sentences; his incisive statements; his picturesque descriptions; his vehemence, his sparkling eyes; his sharply accentuated tones; his emphatic conclusions, are all here so livingly given that we feel them coming in upon us like a tide. When we have finished the story that has carried us on and on like a Venetian Gondola, we cry with enlarged heart, "God bless Dr. MacKay"—and "Thank God for Dr. MacKay." This book brings out of the reserve and the hidings of the heart, into the light of day, the record of a truly noble and heroic life. A life that will be an inspiration to many a Canadian youth, and that may determine the destiny of many a Christian worker. It is life full of holy zeal and high endeavor, showing how much may be done within the compass of a quarter of a century when a man's soul is in his service. When Dr. MacKay was only five months in Tamsui he preached his first sermon. He diligently sought to master the language, and was not ashamed to go among the herd-boys to do so. He wrought very hard getting hold of a vocabulary that he might speak freely to the people. He wrought night and day. The growth of his work is told in a way that lays hold upon the heart. We are captivated by the man and go with him into all his experiences. His touring through Northern Formosa is for us as full of excitement as the latest novel. He was not afraid of danger, his trust was in the Lord who made heaven and earth. There is a fine dash of true heroism in him. He went from village to village, and even among the blood-thirsty Aborigines in the mountains without a touch of fear. His work has a grandeur about it which dazzles us. In these twenty three years—sixty chapels have been built and sixty unordained native preachers set to minister to the congregation gathering within them. Sixty dispensaries are at the sixty chapels. There are 1738 native communicants in good standing, and 2633 baptized members. \$2375.74 have been contributed for mission purposes by the natives \$264.10 contributed by natives for the Hospital, and \$269 contributed by the foreign community. There are two foreign ordained missionaries and two native ordained missionaries. There are also Oxford College, a handsome building well equipped, MacKay Hospital, of great value to the mission, and a blessing to thousand of people, and a Girl's School. The result of 23 years heroic daring in preaching the truth to the heathen is poorly understood until we read the story that unfolds to us like a panorama—and a vivid panorama it is!

We very cordially agree with Dr. MacKay's ideal of foreign missionary work. His chapter on native workers for native women is a strong plea, which must carry conviction to every heart. He is not a mere theorizer, he has proved his case in actual experiment. His argument there of "native workers for native women"

is simply unanswerable—and it should be acted on in all our Chinese Work and also in our Indian Work. It is much less costly and it is much more efficient. Dr. MacKay's scholarship is seen in his chapters on "Geography and History," "Geology," "Trees, Plants and Flowers" "Animal life" ethnology in outline—under the general head of "The Island."

When one has read this volume Formosa will no longer be an undiscovered country, it will stand in the light of the noonday sun. And over its plains, and up its mountains, and around its coast shall we often go with Dr. MacKay and his students. The Church in Canada will be proud of this volume. A copy of it ought to be in every Presbyterian family, and in every Sunday School library along side of Paton's Autobiography, MacKay of Uganda and Livingston's Travels. It is a splendid refutation of the oft repeated statement that missions are a failure. The young people of the Church should be encouraged to read it as the old certainly will read it. We are glad to think that it has such a thrilling interest in it that it will win its way not only in Canada but wherever men love to hear of the progress of the Kingdom of our Lord.

Overcoming Besetting Sins.

Our besetting sins are peculiarly humiliating. They cling to us so firmly after we have determined to be rid of them, they reveal their power so often after we have supposed them conquered and abandoned, they assail us so unexpectedly and often beguile us so easily, that we sometimes doubt whether we really have any power of self control remaining or any trustworthy loyalty to God and duty. It is no excuse for us but it certainly is comforting to remember that everybody else is tempted similarly and that our Heavenly Father understands the situation even better than we do.

It is a strong temptation to make special excuses for such sins. Sometimes and to some extent this is proper. For example he who, like so many, has inherited the desire for strong drink certainly has in that fact a special excuse for committing that sin. He is not to blame for the hereditary taste which he cannot help having. It is his misfortune and not his fault, But this excuse is not a justification. He is actually and seriously to blame for yielding. The knowledge of his inherited tendency should serve as a special and solemn warning and restraint, fortifying him against tampering with the temptation which he knows is graver for him than for others.

Besetting sins are to be conquered like any other, by prayer and faith and courage and sturdy resistance, by cherishing holy thoughts and cultivating holy aims, by avoiding circumstances involving temptation, by choosing ennobling companions, by studying how to live in constant communion with the Holy Spirit. When the heart is consciously and gladly surrendered to Him so that His presence and power rule in it, even our severest besetting temptations can find little or no opportunity of access.

The sins which beset us specially do us a great service in teaching us self-distrust and humility. But for them also many of our greatest spiritual victories would not be won and our characters would not gain that degree of vigor which now is attainable. When we come to look back upon our lives from the divine point of view we shall confess that in spite of all the sorrow and strain which they caused us, our besetting sins were valuable agents in securing the chief object of life, the development of a holy, heavenly character.—*Congregationalist*.