

MISSION FIELD.

W. F. M. S. Prayer Union.

NEW HEBRIDES.—In the South Seas there are thirty-eight clusters of Islands varying in numbers from 400 as in the Philippines to four as in the Loyalty group. There are about 2,000 of these islands inhabited, and have a population of 10,000,000. They are of wondrous beauty, upon them nature has lavished all the wealth of perpetual summer and yet they have been for centuries the habitation of devils. The New Hebrides group was explored by Capt. Cook, and because of its likeness to the Scottish Hebrides he gave it the name it bears.

The following paragraph from the pamphlet on the New Hebrides, written by the Rev. R. Murray of Halifax, gives a graphic description of their condition when the missionaries first landed.

"The islands are rich in all that lends beauty and loveliness to tropical scenes; mountain ranges clad with forests to the summit; green and fertile valleys, stupendous precipices deep dark gorges, sunless caverns, coral reefs over which the long waves of the Pacific beat and break in ceaseless play. In some of the islands the fearful throes of the earthquake are often felt and in some the volcano thunders continually. Fruits abound. Little labor is required to win a living from the cocoanut grove, and bread fruit tree, and banana patch. The people of these islands when first discovered were sunk in the lowest depths of degradation—depths so profound as to be indescribable on the printed page. Human sacrifices were offered to paltry and cruel gods. Widows were strangled. Infanticide prevailed. Cannibalism was as universal as war, and war was the normal condition of the people. Indeed all the society in the islands was a dead sea of pollution. Petty tribes separated by a mountain, a stream or a narrow arm of the sea, treated each other as deadly foes to be slain and eaten. The whole condition of the people served as a vivid and ghastly illustration of the state into which men sink when left to themselves under most favorable circumstances. Here were tribes not troubled with an endless struggle for food and clothing, shelter and fuel, fearing no external foe, enjoying abundant leisure surrounded with all the loveliness of Eden, and with all the wealth a child of nature could desire, yet they had no knowledge of the true God and they became thieves, robbers, murderers and worse, if worse were possible—treacherous, foul, cruel, revelling in nameless vices, flinging shame upon the very name of man."

It is scarcely possible for man to fall into a worse condition than that so vividly portrayed and where only man is vile. Yet of the 2,000 inhabited islands in the South Seas three hundred have been evangelized. One of the marvels of missionary triumphs is the conversion of the Fiji group, and also the Sandwich group which is entirely conquered for Christ, and is now a centre of light—sending forth the Gospel story to do for others what it did for them. The New Hebrides group has not yet been won, but great progress has been made, and by and by the last barrier will be broken down, and all shall bow to their Creator and rightful Lord.

The island of Erromanga has a melancholy prominence as the scene of the martyrdom of John Williams, the heroic missionary of the London Missionary Society in 1839; of Rev. George N. Gordon in the year 1861, and in 1872, of the Rev. J. D. Gordon, a younger son of the same family who took up the banner which the assassin struck from the hand of his older brother. The Rev. H. A. Robertson now carries on the work, the influences of the Gospel have pervaded the whole island and the assassin and cannibal have given up their murderous feasts and unite in celebrating the Lord's death until He come.

The island of Aneityun upon which Dr. Geddie began his work was before his death so completely cleansed from idolatry that when he was coming home to visit his own land he could not find an idol to take home with him.

Rev. Mr. Armand, one of the most devoted of our missionaries, labored for a time in Efate then on Aneityun, and is now breaking ground on the great island of Santo Espirito. Rev. J. W. McKenzie is at present in charge of Efate and has a strong church and several stations. Eight other Churches have missionaries in the New Hebrides groups, and all have co-operated as one body in Christ, having their annual conferences devising methods for the furtherance of the cause.

Of all mission fields none have been so liberally blessed and none appeal so tenderly to the sympathetic, Christlike spirit because none are so benighted and hopeless.

A Letter from Honan.

The following extracts from a letter from Mr. Grant dated Aug. 17th and addressed to Mr. Hamilton Cassels, will be of special interest to the public.

"The hot season has ended and the rainy season has been cooling and deluging us for the last three weeks, and I hope has now also come to an end. The Cheng river when in its bed flows ten miles north of here. The Cheng and Yu rivers overflowed their banks and reached the gates of Chu Wang on Friday Aug. 10th. The townsmen at once began embanking the town gates. I saw that the provision made to cope with the flood at the north gate was quite inadequate, and I told those who were attending to it so. I hastened home to set the servants at work to embark our own compound. About 4 p.m. word was brought that the river had broken in at the north gate, our landlord soon had a force of men digging and banking up our compound with earth. We all worked hard from 4 p.m. till 2 a.m., when the water reached our compound and the wall being of mud it was soon undermined and laid low. The water rushed in and all was over. The forty men skipped out and I and the servants rushed to the houses to raise everything perishable out of the water. We had all made as safe as possible at 2.30 p.m., when we returned at 3 a.m. the water in the compound was 2½ feet deep. It reached its highest point on Sabbath and Monday when there was about 3½ feet of water on the level. Only one house in the compound was always dry. By constant watchfulness and hard work we have saved all our personal property from severe damage.

The compound walls are all gone. Of the seventeen rooms on the northern part of the compound, i.e., the part originally leased, 7 have succumbed. Of the four rooms in the southern part leased last summer for hospital purposes none remain intact.

This is the worst flood that has been here during the last thirty years. Four men who lived near us have been drowned and numbers of women and children, including one of the eight pupils who attend our school here. The women are perfectly helpless on account of their small feet—if they once fall they are gone. The Chinese will say 'it is only a woman.' Nearly all the houses around have fallen down and the country for miles around is under several feet of water. The fall crops which were just ripening are ruined.

Now that the water is falling and soon only the ruins and debris will be left probably a very unhealthy time will follow.

The house of Mrs. Wu, our Bible woman, fell in upon her. She was providentially spared, though she was so bruised beneath the bricks, and beams, and tiles, that we could when we rushed to rescue her only see a small part of the back of her head, still she has suffered no serious injury and is about again. Mr. McGillivray had left by cart on July 30th to visit Hsin Hsun, Hsin Chen, and then return by Cheng Te Fu to Chu Wang. He was overtaken by the floods when at Cheng Te Fu, and was detained there so I was here alone."

These extracts give another phase of the difficulties of a Missionary's life in China.

Winter Work in the West.

Editor Presbyterian Review:

SIR,—I see that our energetic superintendent has published a vigorous letter "relative to manuring fields during the winter months. The note of warning is timely, and the call is urgent, but the response what of it, not so spontaneous. Far from the decision which Peter and the rest of his companions came to, but the opposites—"its not for me" "my work is in the foreign field," my work is in "Montreal," "Kingston," "Toronto," city's where congregations are numerous, where ministers are likewise numerous, and where students and professors could undertake much of the work. Now Mr. Editor and fellow laborers in the Master's vineyard, I would suggest a remedy for the disease which is laying its hand upon our work in this, the western section of our Church. Instead of our ministers in the east taking their holidays in the summer time, let them take their holidays in winter—come West and experience our bracing "nor-wester winds," our modest churches—with no gorgeously furnished parlors, or stable accommodation for your steed. Come West and experience some of the hard luck which meet our missionaries on every hand. Come West and be preacher, elder, precentor, sexton, organizer, etc.; come West and behold the indifference, lukewarmness, jealousy, etc., that abounds in our undulating prairies—among our own church as well as others. Come west and receive the same treatment which we receive from the church universal through the agents—who sit in their warm offices—enjoying every luxury on good fat salaries, no reduction or deduction on them, all that I can see is on our missionaries, and when pay day on earth comes is \$16 or \$50 less the amount promised, no wonder many do not harken and respond to the cry, "Come West and help us."

Many of the students who come West return East half-paid, and under paid at that, with a chilling story of Manitoba and the treatment they have received while here, which more or less effects the missionary zeal of our students.

Again, young inexperienced and raw recruits are sent West to