

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

LETTER FROM FORMOSA.

MR. EDITOR, I think I carried my description in my last as far as Amoy. In Amoy we spent ten days in the house of the Rev. Mr. Sadler, of the London mission, where we received great kindness. The city of Amoy has a population of 250,000, but like all Chinese cities covers a comparatively small space, probably not more than a town of six or eight thousand in Canada. When you have seen one Chinese city you have seen them all, so far as their general features go. The foreign community, like all the foreign settlements in the East, is not in the Chinese city but removed some distance. Here in Amoy the settlement is on an island in the river opposite the Chinese city. There are about fifty families, merchants and missionaries. Of the latter there are two American Presbyterian, one London missionary, five English Presbyterian. There is a pleasant church where the missionaries preach in turn on the Lord's Day, and where I preached on both Sabbaths during our stay.

The mission stations are out in the district round the city, at various distances, some as far as fifty or sixty miles. These are visited statedly by the missionaries. At each station also is settled a native pastor in charge. The English mission is just now building a steamer of eighty tons burden for the use of the mission districts of Swatow and Amoy.

On the 10th of June we set sail in the steamer "Albay" for Tamsui, glad at having, at last, taken our final stage in hand. We started at 6 p.m. on Monday. When out to sea we found a head wind and tide, and in Formosa channel, these are no slight things. We consequently ran up the coast directly opposite Tamsui, where, in a beautiful bay, at 2 p.m., on Tuesday, opposite a pretty Chinese town, we cast anchor. This was done because there is a sand bar opposite Tamsui which can be crossed only at high tide; and the captain proposed to wait at anchor, take a quiet dinner and a run on shore, and then run across the Channel during the night, reaching Tamsui early in the morning at high tide. The captain, mate, engineer and ourselves went ashore and had a pleasant stroll. Mrs. Junor was the first European woman who had ever set foot on the island, and we were soon surrounded by a crowd of men and boys. We were compelled to return to the boat for refuge from their curiosity. Even then they waded out into the water and surrounded the boat. There was no rudeness, only curiosity. I collected a great number of pretty shells. How we wished that we could speak to the people, there was such a fine chance to preach the gospel. But our mouths were sealed. After dinner at 2 p.m., we weighed anchor for Tamsui, which we reached the next morning, June 12th, about 7 a.m. We looked anxiously for Mr. McKay but he did not appear. We learned that he was up in the country three or four days' journey.

And now as to our own mission in north Formosa. The success of this mission, so far, is simply marvelous. I believe Mr. McKay has laid the foundations strong and deep. There are now fourteen chapels in the mission, a fine band of native preachers, and another band in the stage of students. These form the hope of the Church here, and they look like men who can be depended upon. I can say little as yet from personal knowledge of the mission, except that I know it is in a prosperous condition. On the first Sabbath Mr. McKay and I and one of the helpers, at 9 o'clock a.m., took a "sampan" (Chinese boat) and started across the river for one of the chapels. Having crossed the river at its mouth (about half a mile), we walked along the beach for about a mile and then struck in across country among the rice fields, and about half a mile from the shore came upon a small village in which stood the chapel. The building is of brick and contains five rooms, (1) a central one about 24x18, (2) two rooms at each end (these are two for the helper and his family who live there, and two for the missionary when he is there). The chapel was nearly full sixty in all. All were farmers, rough and poor looking. Most of this class dress about as follows. At work they wear only a pair of short pants, reaching only above the knee, on Sabbath some of them wear loose, thin, blue shirts outside the pants. No one wears anything on the head at any time.

The service consisted of singing (good and spirited, hymns, reading, and addresses of from five to ten min-

utes by a helper, Mr. McKay, and myself (Mr. McKay interpreting).

Then we had dinner in the chapel after which we had another service. Both were interesting and the people seemed to enter into them with great spirit. The singing was especially good. Chinese singing is peculiar. No Chinaman can take a half note, and in consequence the whole style of the music is changed. They sang hymns familiar but I could by no means follow. Moreover the meaning of Chinese words depends almost wholly on the tone given to each one, and to this the music must be suited. Their voices are harsh and inflexible and yet the music has a plaintive and not at all unpleasant sound. But it was so hearty that one forgot all inequalities in the pleasure of it. After service we started back, under a broiling sun, on the burning sands, took the sampan and reached home about half past two o'clock p.m. The whole day was very enjoyable indeed. On the next Sabbath we had service in Tamsui. Tamsui is a small town of perhaps six or eight thousand and lies down by the river, about five minutes walk from our house. It is full of filth and horrible smells, as are all Chinese towns. In the midst of it is the hospital, a poor, miserable building for such a purpose, and in the hospital is the chapel. I held a service in English in my house at half-past ten a.m. at which were about a dozen. Mr. McKay held one in the town shortly before, and then came up to the English service. In the afternoon, at two o'clock, another service was held in the town of the same character as the one described. The chapel was full as before and the service hearty.

On the third Sabbath at seven a.m., we started for Bangkok. Here is the most important point in north Formosa, and the building of a chapel there was the most important step in the history of the mission. Mr. McKay achieved a triumph, in doing so, over all the most powerful opposing influences in the north. Here was where the boast was made that no chapel could be built. Here was where the people threatened the life of Mr. McKay and his helpers if he dared to attempt establishing the hated religion of Jesus. Here the highest officials interfered to prevent him. The people rose in a body for the same purpose. They raged and threatened but all to no purpose. Mr. McKay wisely saw that he had now come to the tug of battle and to falter was to fail. He knew he was right, and in the Lord's way, and he rightly stood firm as a rock, even to the danger of losing his life. He clearly saw that the whole heathen population of north Formosa was eagerly watching for his success or failure. His triumph was one of great moment. Here in the supreme Prefectural city, after the most persistent and powerful opposition, the hated gospel has triumphed, and with such success as the heathen fully appreciate. Bangkok has about fifty or sixty thousand people. The chapel is in the midst of the city. The city lies up the river about twelve miles. We started Mr. McKay, Mrs. McKay, one of the helpers, and myself, in a rapid boat (a long, flat-bottomed boat, propelled by two scullers, and with an awning of bamboo). We sculled for about three hours against a head wind, when Mr. McKay and myself got out to walk, walking three or four miles under a broiling sun to the chapel, where in a few minutes we had a crowd. Here the chapel consists of two rooms. After we had rested and drunk a few cups of tea (Chinese cups a little smaller than an egg-cup) service began. The service was much the same, only it was evident the thing was strange. Even the street was full, people crowding in to look. After service the people came to be healed, several wanting teeth extracted. One man came with a poor little baby whose hand was in a fearful condition. About two p.m. Mr. McKay and I started for the next chapel a walk of about two miles. The fellow who wanted the teeth extracted followed us (Mr. McKay not having his instruments). This latter chapel, Toa Liong Pong, is a very pretty one, built of brick and having in front a large, covered, open court. It stands in the midst of a large open field of peanuts. Here it is proposed to hold this fall the first great public gathering of the Church. The heathen, it seems, have their great feasts about October and November, and Mr. McKay and I think that a great field day for our Christian people would do them good in many ways. We are looking forward to it with great hope and pleasure. This will reach you before it comes off, and here let me ask for the prayers of the Lord's people that it may be greatly blessed. What a great and hopeful field this is—a field in which faithful work for Christ must tell with peculiar effect, as the past

has clearly shown. How strong is my wish that I could let the Church see the work that has been done and the prospect of what may be done. How it would stir your hearts with thankfulness and a strong purpose to carry on the work and bring the knowledge of Jesus, so blessed to yourselves, to these poor people, steeped to the lips in superstition and ignorance. And yet what has been done is seen here to be like the very smallest drop in the great ocean. The Church must prepare for greater work yet. She has undertaken this mission and it has proved successful beyond expectation. Her first missionary went through untold labor, anxiety, and suffering, to give it to the Church in its present state. The Lord has preserved his life through it all, and on every hand are signs of great hope and promise for the future. Thus both have reason for thankfulness; he, that the Lord has permitted him to see such fruit of his labor; and the Church, that such a work has been put to her hand to be done. K. F. JUNOR.

Tamsui, July 6th, 1878.

PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY.

MR. EDITOR,—It is not my purpose to engage in controversy with any one in relation to early Canadian Presbyterian history, but I may not entirely overlook the communication in your last issue criticising my previous allusion to the U. E. Loyalists. The writer has, very strangely, as it seems to me, misconceived the whole bearing of my article, and misinterpreted my language, while he has furnished the missing link, if there was one, in the evidence of the substantial accuracy of my statements. No one can read the communication referred to without learning from it that, among the early Presbyterian ministers in this section, there were what might be designated as two schools, differing materially as to measures and customs, and strongly set in favor of their own. I do not intend to laud the one school or to condemn the other, but to draw the inference, (which might have been stated as a historical fact) that "the radical and sudden changes of customs and policy" consequent upon the withdrawal of the ministers of one of those schools, and the substitution of the ministers of the other school, was a cause of spiritual declension in the Niagara District.

I will not occupy your space by noticing the communication in detail, as most of the questions will naturally come up in a future paper. If "J. P." and others having access to records or other means of information, will assist me to gather up the fragments of Presbyterian history which are not already lost, they will, in due time, understand that I do not "undervalue the men who bore the heat and burden of the day," whether they were "Progressive American ministers" or "staunch conservatives from Scotland and Ireland;" and, especially, that none of the "U. P. missionaries" require "vindication" from any "charge" of mine. As yet, I have made no "charge" against any pioneer ministers.

Just now, I am very anxious to ascertain where a copy of the printed minutes of the United Synod, or of the Presbytery of York, can be consulted. Two papers are being delayed for the want of information which I have thus far been unable to obtain from any other source. H. S. MCCOLLUM.

St. Catharines, Sept. 9th, 1878.

MERCY.

Break a law of nature and you will receive punishment inevitably. Nature knows no mercy! It is written on her stern brow, that the soul that breaks her laws shall bear the penalty. I asked the sea if she knew of mercy, but received no response; I asked the swollen floods, the flashing lightning, and the blackening storm, but they echoed with an angry voice, "No mercy in me!" I asked the brook rippling over its rocky floor, and it whispered to me, that "life is short and fleeting." I looked among the ruins of empires; I sifted the dust of depopulated cities; I perused the history of mankind, past and present—all said "mercy is not in me." Nature when rightly interpreted alleviates no suffering, but intimates her displeasure against the violation of her rigid laws. Everywhere law reigns supreme with an irrevocable penalty. Whence mercy then? I turned my ear to the throne of the heavenly grace, and heard a voice speaking unto me, "I desired mercy." Mercy is of divine origin, not human; supernatural, not natural. M. C. C.