

strength to enter an occupy with fidelity and zeal.

Notes on Jamaica.

FROM MR. DOWNIE'S LETTERS.

"Jamaica is at present in a depressed state commercially. It is not now the mine of wealth that it once was. Were one to credit all that was said on the subject, he would imagine that poverty prevailed from one end of the island to the other. Jamaica, however, is poor only in comparison with its former riches. There is still a great deal of business done, and there are still many wealthy people on the island. The lack among the coloured population, is enterprise and forethought. Many of the negroes are indolent, but few of them seem to have the tact of turning their industry to the greatest advantage. Many of them are indolent, but idleness is not so common among them as is generally represented. I believe that one great evil here, is the ease with which they can make a living. They have no winter to provide for, no fuel to seek, their clothing on week days is of the plainest and lightest description, although most of them dress very fashionably on Sabbath. For months they can live on mangoes, which grow in great abundance on the trees, for months on bread-fruit, for months on gooseberries, which resemble in shape and taste the common pea, besides having a great variety of other fruits. The trees here are always green, and each month produces a fresh profusion of fruits. Yet with all this abundance, the peasantry, taken as a whole, are poorer than the people generally in Nova Scotia, where there is a winter of six months duration to contend with. Speaking of the fruits of Jamaica, I may say, many of them are delicious, but others are, to my taste at least, insipid.

"I am now settled at Hamden, seven miles from Falmouth, on the north side of Jamaica. The drive from Falmouth to Hamden is a gradual ascent, and we are about 500 feet above the level of the sea. Hamden is much cooler than Falmouth, which again is much cooler than Montego Bay. The last mentioned place is shut in by the Bay from the land and sea-breeze, whereas Falmouth stands on a promontory, and has a breeze constantly playing on it.

"I am very much delighted with my sphere of labour. The congregation is a very large one, and is for a Creole congregation, very well organized. In some of the Jamaica congregations the minister has to act as treasurer. Here I have both a treasurer and a number of collectors. There are twenty-three Sabbath School teachers, and the classes are very well conducted. The teachers meet for business every quarter. There are three week-day schools

connected with the congregation. Two of the teachers draw salaries from the Mission Board, and make what they can of the fees. The third teacher gets the fees of his school, and draws a salary from the Taylor bequest. The reason why he draws nothing from the Board is that a number of years ago he was suspended from the church. He is now restored, and is a consistent member, but the standing rule of the Board is to give no aid in such cases. He gets also a small salary from the Session funds.

"I should like to see Hampden become self-supporting, but the ministers here tell me if I get them to pay £200 of the salary, it is as much as can be expected, while the Board pays the other £50. They support the congregational missionary without assistance from the Board, have to pay school fees for the children, have taxes to meet, and have to sustain a large number of poor people out of the congregational funds.

"The congregation here reside chiefly in villages. I am arranging to hold a meeting at each of these villages once a month. At each village there is a hall, or, as they call it, a praying house. I hold these meetings at 7 o'clock in the morning, before the people go to their work. At Ebenezer, on the South side of the island, where I spent a number of weeks, the people own their own land, and are well off. Here the great majority work on the sugar estates from Monday till Thursday, and on their own provision grounds on Friday and Saturday. The great mass are not able to do much. The highest contributor in Hampden is a negro who was once a slave. He is a mason, and recently bought a beautiful estate near Hampden. He drives to church in his carriage every Sabbath. He gives £10 sterling per annum for stipend.

"You will naturally enquire whether missions to the black population has been a success or a failure. In a letter which I received from one of the ministers in Jamaica, immediately after my arrival, one counsel he gave me was to suspend my judgment, and not to express an opinion about the spiritual condition of the people, for at least a year. The advice was, I think, a good one, for I may say that my views about the state of religion in the island are every day undergoing a modification. Speaking in general terms, I may say, that missions to a large extent have been a success. There are doubtless many, who by missionary influence have become the genuine subjects of Divine grace, and who for many years have exhibited a deportment according with their Christian profession. The very countenances of such indicate the change that has passed over them. As I have heard ministers remark, and I myself have observed they lose the degraded look of their unreclaimed brethren.