

luxuriant vegetation, which in some instances attains an enormous size, almost leaving us in doubt whether they are plants or trees. There are many varieties of fruits, to us unknown, and the forests abound in trees whose wood is rich, and sought for throughout the world. These forests at certain seasons of the year, seem like immense flower gardens, for many of them bloom themselves, and besides are interlaced with a thousand creepers and vines, and are also covered with brilliant blossoming parasites, which altogether form a *tout ensemble* which realises the glowing descriptions of Chateaubriand.

And nature here, aided by cultivation, returns to man an hundred-fold. Ships from all nations sail to this port to bear to other lands the fruit of the little green-leaved coffee-tree. Of many important articles of food, the slovenly labour of slaves will produce two crops a year; while with diligence, of some things, three harvests might be had.

Such is the nature of this lovely region. But what is man?

The history of the first settlement of Rio de Janeiro should be interesting to every Christian. It is not generally known that the first attempt to people this locality was by Protestants, and if treachery and Romish intolerance had not been triumphant, perhaps there might have been seen in this territorial paradise a flourishing Protestant state with an open Bible, and all the blessings and privileges which attend a pure religion. Dr. Kidder in his work on Brazil, says: "The first settlement in this harbour (that of Rio de Janeiro) was commenced by the French as early as 1555. The leader of the expedition was Nicholas Durand de Villegagnon, a man of considerable abilities, and of some distinction in the French naval service. This individual had the address, in the outset, to secure the patronage of Coligny, the admiral of France, the distinguished statesman and friend of the Protestants. He proposed to found a asylum for the persecuted Huguenots. A respectable number of colonists were enlisted, many of whom, however, abandoned the expedition when driven back to Dieppe, after a severe storm. The remainder reached Rio de Janeiro, and there commenced the colony. On the return of the vessels to Europe, considerable zeal was awakened for the establishment of the Reformed Religion in these remote parts. The Church of Geneva, Switzerland, became interested in the object and sent two ministers and fourteen students, who determined to brave all the hardships of an unknown climate, and of a new mode of life in the cause."

But the enemies of Christ triumphed. Many were induced to embark, and already reached the distant shores, where there "was every reason to hope that the Reformation would take root, and fill the South, as well as the North, with a Protestant people." But Villegagnon, instead of showing himself a friend to Protestantism and Coligny, displayed the blackest ingratitude, and demonstrated that he was a persecuting Romanist, and a worthy follower and imitator of the Huguenot-hating Guises. Those that were sent back to France suffered most severely. Those who remained (with the exception of some who escaped to the Portuguese) were put to death by the unrelenting Villegagnon. Those who reached France arrived just in time to undecieve a body of Flemish adventures who were ready to embark for Brazil, and also about ten thousand Frenchmen who would have emigrated if the object of Coligny in founding a colony had not been wickedly betrayed."

Thus was frustrated a noble undertaking, which, if it had not been for the designs of wicked men, would have been of incalculable benefit to South America. I know not if there has been another like enterprise on the South American Continent which resembles in certain degree the settlement of our New England, and which in a Christian and historical point of view is so full of interest.

But Villegagnon did not succeed in holding for France this fertile land. It was wrested from him by the Portuguese, and the country ever since has been in their hands, or in those of their descendants, the ruling people in Brazil. Of course, under their sway a corrupt religion has prevailed, and but few attempts have been made to preach the pure Gospel. In 1806, the Royal Family of Portugal fleeing from the Conqueror of Europe, sought a refuge in Brazil. Rio became the Court Capital, and from that time commenced her great prosperity, which continues in an increasing ratio unto this day. Before the residence of the Royal Family on this Continent, Brazil was shut up to foreigners, with a Chinese jealousy. But from that period the ports were thrown open. In 1831, Brazil became an Empire, independent of Portugal, with her sovereigns of the same house, in whose veins course the blood of the Imperial House of Austria, and of the Dukes of Braganza. As early as 1520 or 1523, an English Chapel (for the use of British Legation and the many Englishmen in Rio) was erected, in which place there has been worship each Sabbath, up to the present time. It is now under the charge of an Evangelical Clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Graham. The Germans also have a Church connected with the Prussian Embassy, but the clergyman is unevangelical, and, I have been informed, rationalistic. There have been American Seamen Chaplains here from time to time; and about twelve or fifteen years ago, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, established a mission under the direction of the Rev. D. P. Kidder, D.D., the present efficient Editor of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Board's Publications, in the city of New York. He did much to circulate the Scriptures, and is affectionately remembered both at Rio and elsewhere in this Empire. He travelled extensively among the cities of the coast-provinces, and has written the most useful and entertaining work on Brazil that has yet appeared. His investigations and researches have been complimented in England, and having almost the body of his "sketches" transferred into one of the books

called forth by, and published for, the British Parliament. Just as he had become familiar with the language, and was about to open services for the Brazilians, severe affliction and bereavement made it necessary for him to abandon the field of his hopes and prayers.

The Constitution of Brazil is most free. Although the *Presiding Officer* of *Egypt* is confined to one family, and is hereditary; yet the nobility cannot transmit to their descendants noble honours and titles—it is a nobility of merit. Suffrage is almost universal. The press is entirely free, and although the religion of the State is the Roman Catholic, yet the laws are more tolerant than those of any other country in the world where the Romish Religion prevails, and in this nation, where is a language easily acquired, where people respect not their priests, where there is a free press and a rising population, now ought the professors of a purer Christianity to endeavour to cause to be planted here the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Let us not neglect the heathen; but are we not neglecting nations near us—who have a greater bearing on the civilised world than any heathen people, and who have a greater need of the Gospel?

The law of this country says that although the Roman Catholic Religion is that of the State, yet all other forms of religion are allowed to be held and practised, except in buildings "having the exterior form of a temple," and persecution on the ground of religious opinion is strictly forbidden. Now the cities of the coast might all be occupied as well as Rio de Janeiro, and it is these cities which influence, and I might say govern, this country of five or six millions of people. Such establishments might not be enabled to do much more than to sow the seed for some years, yet we know that "in due time we shall reap if we faint not." Let the seed be sown now, let the missionaries learn the great lesson of perseverance—"learn to labour and to wait;" and Christ, the Captain of our salvation, will give the victory if God's people are faithful, prayerful, and charitable.

Your missionary at Rio de Janeiro has had much to encourage him. He has one service upon the water and one upon the land each Sabbath. The latter is attended by Americans and foreigners, and by some Portuguese and Brazilians. A number of young men, Portuguese, are constant attendants, and distribution of Tracts and Bibles has no hindrance. And he has good reason to know that they are read: in his next communication he will speak particularly of the mission and its prospects.—*Rev. J. C. Fletcher.*

AMERICAN INDIANS.

WHAT THE GOSPEL HAS DONE FOR THE CHOCTAWS.

The report on The Success of Indian Missions, read by Mr. Treat at the meeting of the Board in Troy, embodied the following statement in respect to the Choctaws. Some of the facts appeared before in the *Journal*, but they are of so much interest, that our readers will not be sorry to see them again;—

In 1818 the Choctaws, were emphatically a pagan and savage people. The worst vices of heathenism prevailed. Polygamy and infanticide, wars and fightings, were a part, and only a part, of their sad heritage. On their native stock, moreover, they had engrafted some of the worst vices of civilization. They were a drunken people. When Mr. Kingsbury once inquired, "Is there not a sober man among you?" he was told in reply that there was one!

But as we go to their present home, and survey their fields, and look into their dwellings, we obtain abundant evidence of comfort, of thrift, of progress. When we examine their schools, we discover the sure signs of quickening and expanding intellect. When we enter their churches, we feel that the Lord, in very deed, is in the midst of them. With joyful surprise we ask, "Is this the people that our missionaries found, thirty-four years ago, so ignorant and so degraded?" It will be well, however, to go into some detail.

1. A large number of the Choctaws are the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.—The Board are already apprised, that the number of such under the care of our mission is thirteen hundred. Other societies, which have entered the field at a later day, report about the same number of communicants; so that one eighth of the whole tribe belong to the visible church. Of the evidence of piety furnished by those connected with other organizations, we cannot speak. But we have taken some pains to ascertain the facts in regard to our own churches; and the result is, that they give nearly the same evidence, in kind and degree, that we find elsewhere. With them, as with us, there are the lukewarm and the unfruitful. With them, as with us, there are the inconstant and the wayward. But we find there, as here, bright examples of godly living, of large-hearted benevolence, of progress in knowledge and holiness. And there too, as here, we see happy deathbeds, joyful anticipations of coming blessedness, and triumphant departures to the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

In some things, moreover, these churches are ensamples to us. As might be expected, cases of discipline frequently occur; but we are assured by Mr. Byington that there is no occasion for the taking of testimony. The delinquent becomes himself the witness; and the truth is soon disclosed. A member of a Choctaw church, in good standing, never refuses to pray, whatever may be the occasion. If the head of a family makes a profession of religion, he is sure to set up an altar in his household; and if at any time the daily offering is withheld, it is freely admitted that "sin lieth at the door." After what has been said, it will