

MISSION FIELD.

Letter from Formosa.

The following extracts from a letter from Formosa, by Mr. Gauld will be interesting and encouraging to the Christians who are contributing to and taking an interest in that Mission.

DEAR MR. MACKAY.—“Although China is engaged in war and foreigners in consequence have suffered in other parts, we in North Formosa are unmolested.”

“The Commander-in-chief of the Forces, a Mohanmedan—is very friendly towards foreigners. . . Not being able to procure a suitable house in the Chinese town we lent him Oxford College—not being in use—and he has shown himself very grateful and friendly.”

“A man's foes shall be they of his own household.” A short time ago, at Teug-saug-khoe, a village in North Formosa, a certain man, a heathen, died and left a widow and four sons, one of whom is a Christian. According to their custom the heathen members of the family feasted, and worshipped the spirit of the dead, and called on the Christian to join with them. He declined. His heathen brothers beat him severely, his mother and wife sanctioning the harsh treatment. He still remained firm, and all joined in turning him adrift from the household. The property of the deceased was divided, and the heathen members of the family refused to allow the Christian to share with them. Against all this treatment he did not complain, but his wife went further than merely joining with the others in turning him out, she determined to marry another man, and of course, take her little boy, an only child of two or three summers, along with her. The heart of the father could no longer quietly submit. He wrote to Rev. Giam Cheng Hoa, asking his advice and assistance. On Saturday, Sept. 25th., Pastor Giam went to Teug-saug-khoe. First he met the Christian member of the family, who told him that he sought no compensation for the beating he had received, nor for being turned out; nor did he ask to share the property left by his father. However, he could not give up his little child without an effort. His wife seemed determined to marry another man. This he could not very well prevent, as it seemed to him: so, if in accordance with the law of Christ, he would first give her a writing of divorcement. Still he was not very clear with regard to his duties as a Christian, therefore, wished to be taught. Mr. Giam told him that first they must very earnestly endeavor to persuade his wife to return to him; and if this failed to then consider what further course to pursue. After this Mr. Giam went to visit the three brothers in succession, taking care to leave the worst till the last. His first thought was not to interfere with the property; but as he pondered on the nature of the situation a little longer, he thought that it would be proper to reward the unselfish conduct of the Christian, if possible, by a share of the patrimony, as well as by a renewed enjoyment of the state of matrimony. He came to brother No. 1, who thought their Christian brother should not share the patrimony with them; but expressed himself as willing to have him do so if the other brothers were of like mind, and asked Pastor Giam to interview these others. Brother No. 2 expressed himself in like manner, and asked the Pastor to see No. 3. No. 3 was very bitter; he told Mr. Giam that it was no affair of his. “Oh yes it is,” was the answer, for your brother is also our brother, and we have a right to help him to obtain justice.” No. 3 told him that as their Christian brother did not honor the spirit of the dead father, he could not be allowed to share the father's estate. “Whose law are you propounding?” was the reply, “the Emperor's or your own?” But talking would not prevail, so Mr. Giam warned him that if by Monday morning he was not prepared, according to the law of China, to share the property with his Christian brother, the case would be put into the hands of the District Magistrate. Then he left the man, and sent two small officials to interview him, and warn him of the law. This they did, and even shut him in prison, without avail. So on Monday morning, Sept. 17th., all started for the Kelung Yamen. They had proceeded scarcely a mile when the man's courage, rather boastfulness, failed him. He expressed himself as now willing to make amends for the past and entreated them to return. Mr. Giam expressed himself as now unwilling to go back, so they went on about one-third of a mile further. Then the two other heathen brothers came running, and entreated mercy. At length all returned. The necessary writings were drawn out, and the property shared among all brothers alike, the Christian included. After this, Mr. Giam went to interview the Christian's wife. At first she would not see him; but along with her husband he followed her to the kitchen; and began to speak first sternly. He spoke to her of the relative duties of husband and wife in such a way that she was soon melted, and accompanied them to the front room, where many heathen had assembled to see and hear. Here the talk was continued; and all the heathen present pronounced what the Christian teacher said, to be excellent doctrine.

The wife was prevailed on to take the old torn and soiled clothes her husband was wearing, to wash and mend; and to give him in return clean and whole garments. When Pastor Giam left, which he did that same day, everything seemed in a fair way to a satisfactory, peaceable settlement.

I need not comment on the above incident. Were there here no such examples of faithfulness, the preacher of the Gospel of the grace of God should still persevere in making known the truth. However the knowledge of such cases coming to us from time to time greatly helps to increase our happiness in the work to which we have been appointed.

One of the early converts, an elder of Siam-Tiam congregation, has recently died. From his first acceptance of the faith of Christ he proved himself true to his Master; ready to endure persecution and loss, for the Lord's sake. I should like to give you a short sketch of his Christian life, but shall defer till a future time.

We have all good health. Mrs. Gauld sends kindest regards. Very sincerely yours. W. GAULD.

Letter from Honan.

Extract from letter from Rev. Murdoch Mackenzie, Hsin Chen, Honan, China, to Rev. W. J. Dey, of Simcoe, is of public interest.

“About twenty miles distant from Hsin-Chen there is a village in which eighteen months ago there was not an individual who took any interest in the Gospel. (The name in Romanized Chinese is *Hsias Chai* which you may translate *Little Fort*). In spring of last year one man in that village heard the Gospel story for the first time and brought some Christian books. Returning home he told what he had heard, and read with others the little book. Soon afterwards he led some sick persons to our station for medical treatment. There he heard the way of salvation by Christ alone made known more fully. His interest was awakened and he at once began to inquire of the native Christians in the meeting, the meaning of what he was hearing. Step by step he seemed to be led on, though his manner was not such as to impress us favorably.

He led three different bands of sick people to the doctor for treatment in the course of a few weeks. Then he stated that he was anxious to learn the Christian doctrine, and that several in his native village were desirous of doing the same.

We sent our native helper and our first Honanese convert to visit the village, stay there a few days and then report on the prospect. They came back with a most glowing account of the opening God was making for the Gospel there. Soon after their return four men came to the station and staid with us a few days, giving an encouraging measure of attention to the truth.

It was a most cheering sight to have two or three men daily asking questions on the passages they were reading, and evidently anxious to know the power of the truth in their own hearts.

We helped them as well as we knew how and cherished bright hopes for their future. On their return home the number of interested ones began to increase, until, about a dozen persons were regarded as inquirers.

Circumstances rendered it unwise for me to visit the village but our native helper went several times. Then Mr. McGillivray paid two visits and was drawn to the people from the first. During that winter we had the leading member of the little band often in at our Sabbath morning service in Hsin Chen having walked twenty miles to be present.

In April Mr. McGillivray and I went there to find out how many really desired to have their names recorded as inquirers. We took them in one by one and questioned them carefully as to their knowledge and understanding of the Gospels; their attitude towards idolatry, performance of religious duties, their belief in and feelings towards the Lord Jesus Christ, their motives in seeking to enter the Christian Church and many other important topics. The answers given were highly encouraging and made us quite hopeful.

Next day was a busy and happy Sabbath, one of the best in China. As God would have it, we doubt not, their reading in course was from Matthew, tenth chapter, the first half of it. That gave an opportunity of putting before them the kind of life which Christ called His followers to take up. It was most interesting watching them as the meaning of one verse after another was brought out, largely by question and answer. Then we sang hymns, prayed, conversed freely over what we had heard and had a day of delightful Christian fellowship.

Monday was a most refreshing and encouraging day also. Eleven persons in all had their names recorded. These were all males and we may hope to see the wives of some of them come forward soon on the Saviour's side with their husbands. On Monday night we had a season of prayer when nine Chinese and two foreigners took part. The friends in that village were then in the habit of meeting together for prayer and reading of the Scriptures twice daily and three times on the Sabbath day.

In most cases they endeavor to hold worship in their own homes. Eight out of the eleven had commenced to learn the Chinese characters since their interest in Christianity was awakened. The eldest member of the group was about sixty years of age and the youngest sixteen. Our hearts were strongly drawn to the little band and it is our prayer that each one may be an earnest Christian and a true witness for Christ.

His future is known to God alone. For what He has given us to see we thank Him and take courage. Pray that each member of that little company may have grace given them to persevere in the way of life, and that the truth may from that centre spread abroad to many other villages.”