

Young People's Department.

MISSION BAND LESSON.

FORMOSA.

Leader.—What is Formosa?

Ans.—An island in the China Sea.

Leader.—How far is it from China?

Ans.—About 90 miles.

Leader.—How large is this island?

Ans.—About 237 miles long, and 70 miles wide.

Leader.—What does the word "Formosa" mean?

Ans.—Beautiful.

Leader.—How did the island get this name?

Ans.—Many years ago sailors from Portugal were passing in their ship. Seeing its great beauty they exclaimed "Formosa! Formosa!" and so gave this name to the island.

Leader.—Has Formosa any mountains?

Ans.—Yes, a range rising to about 1,200 feet divides the island into a fertile plain and colder mountain regions.

Leader.—How many people live in Formosa?

Ans.—Nearly three millions of Chinese besides wild tribes in the mountains that cannot be numbered correctly.

Leader.—Who rules over this island?

Ans.—It formerly belonged to the Dutch, but in 1887 became a province of China. In 1894 a war broke out between China and Japan, and as a result Formosa was given to Japan.

Leader.—What about the religions of Formosa?

Ans.—The people worship idols of many kinds; the sun, moon and other objects in nature; their dead ancestors; while the wild tribes in the mountains worship devils.

Leader.—Are there many heathen temples here?

Ans.—Very many, grand and beautiful where large sums of money are spent in idol-worship.

Leader.—Tell us about the divining blocks?

Ans.—An idol is set up under a tree for passers-by to worship. Small blocks are made from the roots of the bamboo tree. The one who worships holds these blocks in his hands, and prays "Oh, idol! Give me wealth!" He then waves the blocks in the air three times and tosses them on the ground. If the sides meaning *yes* are turned up, he pays his money, makes his vows to the idol, and departs. If the blocks answer *no*, the priest persuades him to try again until either his patience or his purse is exhausted.

Leader.—Tell us about the idol feasts?

Ans.—When the people are growing careless in their worship, the priests announce a great feast in honor of some idol. Great quantities of food are provided, and the people come in swarms bringing money and gifts enough to pay the priests for their work.

Leader.—When night comes, what do the priests announce?

Ans.—That the dead ancestors will join the feast. A great gong sounds to summon their spirits, and a solemn silence is kept while they are satisfying their hunger.

Then the gong sounds again, and a great rush is made for the food that is left, it is "every man for himself," and the strongest gets the most. The noise of such a scramble cannot be described.

Leader.—What do the priests teach about the soul?

Ans.—That every person has three souls. At his death one passes into the unseen world, the second lies in the grave with the body, while the third hovers around the old home on earth, and needs to be fed and clothed. Paper food, money and clothing are daily burned before the tablets which contain the name of the dead ancestors that their blessings may return upon those who thus provide for their supposed needs.

Leader.—Is the worship of these ancestors a great barrier to the Gospel?

Ans.—Yes, it is far easier for a convert to give up all other idols than to forsake the worship of his departed friends.

Leader.—Who first tried to convert the people of Formosa?

Ans.—Roman Catholics in 1859.

Leader.—What Protestant Society came next?

Ans.—The English Presbyterians settled in South Formosa in 1864. They have ten mission stations, and about 1,400 converts.

Leader.—What missionary from Ontario has worked more than twenty years in North Formosa?

Ans.—Dr. George L. MacKay, of Zorra, a village near Woodstock where the Baptist College for boys is located.

Leader.—Who was Dr. MacKay?

Ans.—The first missionary to China sent by the Canadian Presbyterian. In October 1871, he left home and friends to preach Jesus Christ to the heathen.

Leader.—Did he find much difficulty in learning the language?

Ans.—A Chinese servant was his only helper until one day he took a walk out in the country and saw some boys who were herding buffaloes. They called him names, and made fun of him at first, but he tried to talk patiently with them.

Leader.—How did he make them listen?

Ans.—By holding out his watch for them to examine, and letting them count the buttons on his coat.

Leader.—What object had he in view?

Ans.—To learn the language used by the common people. These boys soon became his friends, and talked freely with him. Several of them learned to love Jesus Christ, and one is now a faithful, earnest preacher.

Leader.—Tell about Dr. MacKay's first sermon?

Ans.—In five months he had so mastered the language that he was able to preach a sermon from the text, "What must I do to be saved?"

Leader.—Was Dr. MacKay persecuted?

Ans.—In many ways at first, but his great love and patience at last won some of his enemies for Christ.

Leader.—What special prayer had been made by Dr. MacKay before leaving Canada?

Ans.—That God would give him for his first convert an