

THE CHURCH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

FEBRUARY, 1890.

RELIEF AND REFRESHMENT FROM PRAYER.

That seems a strange mistake of good old Eli, when he saw Hannah's lips silently moving and thought she was drunk. Good women are sometimes so cruelly misjudged by good men, and perhaps quite as often by other good women. But Eli took a generous pleasure in correcting his mistake as soon as he discovered it. Hannah was no such daughter of Belial as he mistook her for. She was "a woman of a sorrowful spirit." She was "in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord, and wept sore." That was the true explanation of what Eli had noticed and misinterpreted. She was praying with great earnestness, silently to human ears, distinctly and loud to the ear of God. She was in God's house, the place which he had chosen to set his name there. She could come thither only once a year, and all the interval was embittered by what made her home-life unsatisfying and annoying. Under the abnormal domestic system which God then tolerated, but never instituted, Hannah was obliged to share her home and her husband with another woman who was not kind to her, and whom yet God in his providence favored as he did not favor Hannah. Her husband was as kind as a husband could be. He tried to comfort and cheer her, and it looks as if he sometimes found it hard work. "She wept, and did not eat." Whatever fits of impatience and ill-humor Hannah may have had, she

was a godly woman, a woman of prayer and of faith. She was a woman who would seek help from the sanctuary, from God.

On one occasion of social festivities, not unlike our Thanksgiving, she withdrew from the feast leaving uneaten the "worthy portion" which her husband had put before her, and went alone into the house of God. There it was that Eli so greatly misjudged her. As soon as he rightly understood the case he gladly revoked his mistaken censure, and sent her away with the comfort of his approval and benediction: "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition which thou hast asked of him. . . . So the woman went her way and did eat, *and her countenance was no more sad.*" How expressive was this of the relief and refreshment of prayer!

Here, as often, the natural and supernatural are intermingled, so that we can hardly discriminate them. Neither is less beautiful or less instructive on this account. The dew that lies so lowly upon the lawn sparkles with celestial brilliancy, just because it receives into its bosom rays that come down from the sun whose coming forth is from the end of heaven. The natural beauty of her who was doubtless fitly named Hannah (*i. e.* beauty, or charm) must have been exalted by "the beauty of the Lord our God" which was upon her when she came forth from his sanctuary in the holy joy of prayer, of which

home before dark at Ching ok wai, where the elders forbid opium smoking and gambling, elsewhere so prevalent.

All the southwest of this important province

of Canton offers a wide field for missionary effort, where now gambling, opium smoking and licentiousness are rife. It is a field as yet largely unoccupied.

A SHANTUNG PARISH.

HUNTER CORBETT, D.D., CHEFOO.

Six weeks ago I left Chefoo with my wife for a journey among the churches and stations in the interior of Shantung. We spent our first Sabbath at a little station where the work for several years has not prospered. This year, however, new life has been instilled by the establishment of two schools, one of them for girls. Four have been received on profession of faith, and two lapsed members, a father and son, have been restored. Others have asked for baptism. Our next station is at a large town, twenty-five miles to the south, at Tai Tsy Chwang. There we found the work full of promise. Nineteen were admitted to the church, two of them widows aged eighty-four and seventy-seven respectively. Both gave clear evidence of having been taught of God. All attributed their first interest in the truth to the attending of a Christian school by their children or grandchildren. For several years we have had one live member, a widow, living there. At her earnest request a Christian school was opened less than two years ago. At the end of a year the school was for a time suspended owing to intense persecution. A great change has come over the people, and we have now three schools, one of them for girls. Our visit gave the work a new impetus, and at the end of a month we returned and spent two days there. Many not only in that but in surrounding villages gave in their names as inquirers, and are now observing the Sabbath and studying the truth. Two of our Bible-women report that in many homes they have found women and children learning to pray, and who seemed as though they could not hear enough about Jesus and what he requires of them.

Another journey of twenty miles brought us to the village of Ta Shin Tan, where we have an influential family of more than thirty persons, all members of the church. The people

there by great self-denial have succeeded in building a beautiful brick church and school-house. While we were there the building was dedicated and a church organized. An elder and a deacon were ordained, and nine persons baptized. There are now three Christian schools in the village.

We next came to Yuen Chwang, one of the Chih Me churches. At this centre, where we have erected a neat little cottage of two rooms for our own use, we remained half a month visiting daily schools and stations in surrounding villages. Four bright boys from the school were received into the church. Fourteen years ago the Christians here in their poverty, by giving most liberally, some going beyond their power, succeeded in erecting a church and school building. Later the school grew until they had to erect additional buildings. Now the congregation has enlarged so that when all are able to be present nearly as many are obliged to sit outside the door, in the open court, as are crowded inside.

We have now, with funds in hand and work promised, sufficient to erect a new church, to be known as the Mary Nixon Corbett Memorial Church. The building will be of well-burned brick of a dark blue color and tile roof. As soon as the wheat is sown and the autumn crops gathered many will work out their subscriptions by wheeling bricks, tiles, stones, timber, clay, and doing whatever is to be done.

At another church, seventeen miles to the east among the mountains, two were restored to church membership. One of them, aged 72, five years ago yielded to the entreaties and threats of two unreasonable and wicked sons, and ceased attending church. The other lives more than ten miles from any Christian and is unable to read. He lost his Sabbath reckoning, and in harvest time worked as all his neighbors

did. At another church seven were added. The school-house purchased and presented by Deacon Chang, a man possessed of but little property, but rich in faith and good works, is for the present used for a church on the Sabbath. The members of the church at Pei Sing, sixteen miles to the north, have lately repaired and enlarged their church and school building. Fourteen new members were added to the church there. Many are there living worthy lives and doing all they can to make known the gospel to their friends and neighbors.

On this journey we have visited five organized churches, eight stations, and examined

seventeen schools—seven of them for girls. Fifty-two have been added to the church on profession of faith, making 94 during the past six months. Four have been restored and one suspended. Thirty children have been baptized. After the arrival of my daughter, Mrs. Hays, and her husband to continue the work here for a time, we go east to visit newly-established stations and schools along the coast, and then return to Chefoo, where I expect to begin with a large class of Bible students and inquirers, the representatives of many villages, and also to open a normal school for the special training of lay preachers and school teachers. Pray for us.

A LETTER FROM CHINA.

KIUNGCHOW, HAINAN, October 26, 1889.

REV. FRANK P. GILMAN:—Soon after the funeral of our little daughter I left Canton with Dr. Thomson for his station at Yeong Kong, and from there I had the company of Mr. White down the peninsula of Linchow to Hainan. I was four weeks on the trip, including one week spent at Yeong Kong. I made the trip for the purpose of seeing the work in that region and of investigating the extent of the use of variations of Hainese on the mainland. The weather was good, and we were quite successful in all respects. At Yeong Kong Mr. White and I were present when Dr. Thomson baptized the first five who have as yet received that ordinance there. There are about ten others who have applied for baptism, but who were not at that time ready for examination. We were very pleasantly surprised to find the work there in such a flourishing condition. The dispensary is open all day, six days in the week, and is well attended. The evening prayers are well attended, and several are under instruction, and the daily preaching is respectfully listened to by a crowd nearly every day. We visited often every part of the place, and a friendly spirit was manifested every day. The present quarters are small and crowded, but better can and will be secured when they are needed.

From Yeong Kong we travelled five days to Mui-luk, where we spent a Sunday with Mr. Colman, who is nicely settled in a large shop, which he uses for a chapel, and has his residence in the back part. He had it very well fitted up, and had

opened it for preaching only a few days before our arrival. The day we reached there it was filled by an attentive though curious audience. He has a large and interesting field, and should have a colleague to enable him to do it justice. He has not even a native preacher at present, but we hope this want will soon be supplied. He is just opening work, and has had as usual opposition from a few officials of influence; but the people generally are friendly, and the opposition is weakening.

HAINESE ON MAINLAND.

Though we walked continually six days from his place to Hainan and crossed the straits—in all a distance of nearly two hundred miles—Mr. Colman is our nearest neighbor, and especially near because to within a day's walk of his place the people understand our dialect better than they do his. We were surprised to find that between Yeong Kong and Mui-luk on the coast is an extensive region over twenty miles long, containing several large towns, where they speak a variety of Hainese, and nearly all on the peninsula near here use that dialect; so that I now believe that our Hainese-speaking population occupy a district at least twice as large as this island. We came through three cities nearly as large as Kiungchow, where there are now no Protestant missionaries, and which have rarely been visited by a missionary before. All three use a variety of Hainese, and naturally look to us for the gospel, as do also the many market towns and villages of that whole extensive region.