

THE CHURCH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

SEPTEMBER, 1898.

CURRENT EVENTS AND THE KINGDOM.

Missions and Statesmanship.—At a Christian Endeavor rally for the discussion of “Missions as Imperative upon our Statesmanship,” the Rev. J. Cumming Smith developed these points: “Missionary work is the leaven which is raising the people of non-Christian lands to a higher plane of intelligence and self-respect. In the promotion of these qualities among nations whose cheap labor imperils our industries, lies the solution of the tariff and immigration questions.” The vast importance of this aggressive effort certainly justifies the appeal which the American Board makes to the young people: “Read, as you do the news and politics of the day, the story of the fields where the Lord is making, through mission workers, the world’s future.”

The Progress of the Kingdom.—The Rev. H. P. Carson, D.D., synodical superintendent of home missions in South Dakota, who has been much interested in that study of current events recommended by THE CHURCH AT HOME AND ABROAD, writes as follows to the young readers of this magazine: “Current events most assuredly have to do with the kingdom of Christ. It is very desirable that as we read of and contemplate them, we apply to them the principles of his kingdom. In them often is plainly seen the unfolding of his plans, the operation of the leaven of his truth. Certainly to them we should apply the tests of these principles. Our present war is for the progress of that civilization that is eminently Christian. May it not be that all Christian nations will hereafter make a broader application of these principles? Shall Christianity sit idly by and yet be in

touch with barbarous infliction of oppression and open practice of such tyranny as prevents humanity from realizing the high end it was made to reach?”

Changing Attitude of the Hindus.—There are the most convincing signs that the temper of the Hindus toward Christianity is changing. Said Dr. E. E. Strong before the National Congregational Council: “The bitter hostility is giving way to respect, and ears and hearts are open that only of late could be reached. Witness that remarkable gift by wealthy Hindus in Madura—one of them a priest of a pagan temple—of a hospital, the whole fine building being given to the mission of the American Board with the full understanding that it is to be a Christian hospital, with daily preaching of the gospel.”

The Serious Work of the World.—“Now that the pastime of war is over,” said a Prussian drill-master at the conclusion of the Franco-German War, “we will return to the serious business of life, which is—drilling.” The war with Spain, now so happily ended, has been no pastime; it was entered upon as a solemn responsibility. Nor shall we bend our energies to the task of making ready for another war, though a valuable lesson about readiness for an emergency has been well learned. The events of the past few months, controlled by Almighty God, have opened a new door of opportunity. Ours is a sacred mission of freedom and progress, as Ambassador Hay pointed out at a banquet in the Mansion House, London. We are charged with duties toward others that we cannot evade. Henceforth we must bear a larger part in “the serious work of the world.” Mr.

Letters.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTER OF REV. H. H. JESSUP, D.D., BEIRUT, MAY 2, 1898.

The Presbytery of Mt. Lebanon has just held its meeting in Beirut. Eight churches were represented by fifteen Syrian and seven American members, and the sessions continued from Tuesday evening to Friday evening. In addition to the opening sermon by Mr. Bird, fifteen different papers and addresses were heard by the commissioners and general audience, and the interest was unabated to the end. The subjects were, "Our Churches and Ministers," "The Holy Spirit's Work and the Recent Keswick Meetings in Beirut," "Christian Giving, and Independence of Foreign Aid," "The Duty of Every Christian to Preach the Gospel," "How to Present the Study of the Bible and Other Religious Books Among Ourselves and Others," "Missionary News from China and Africa," "Addresses to the Children's Rally on Temperance and Keeping the Heart," "Sabbath Observance," "Importance of Teaching the Catechism to Children," "Christian Union."

The spiritual tone of the meetings was high, and it was the general testimony that it was the most thoroughly spiritual gathering we have ever known in Syria. The meeting on Thursday morning, when Dr. Samuel Jessup gave an account of the religious convention in February, and a Syria preacher, Mr. Taurus Saad, spoke of his visits to Mildmay and Keswick in England in 1897, and of the recent awakening in Shoifat, was one of melting tenderness and spiritual power. All felt the presence of the divine Spirit, and when the hour was up, by common consent, the same subject was continued. Mr. Bird, our eldest missionary, said it was the most impressive meeting he ever attended in Syria.

At the children's rally, Friday morning, about 600 boys and girls filled the church and it was a sight long to be remembered. In the afternoon a goodly company sat down together at the Lord's table, the service being conducted by Mr. Bird and Ruo Salleba Jerawan, of Meshghara, our eldest native pastor. In the evening a social gathering was attended in the Gerald Dale Memorial Sabbath-school hall, given by friends in Beirut to the members of presbytery. You would have enjoyed seeing the crowd of young Syrian youth, young men and women, around the organ singing the gospel hymns in Arabic and English, led by the ringing voice of Mr. Doolittle.

It was altogether a model meeting of presbytery,

a minimum of ecclesiastical routine and a maximum of uplifting, spiritual conference on religious and missionary subjects.

The next meeting, in 1899, will be at the station of the Free Church of Scotland Mission, at Shiore, in Mt. Lebanon.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER OF REV. HUNTER CORBETT, D.D., APRIL 11, 1898.

On Saturday evening I returned from a journey of more than a month, visiting churches and stations in the interior. At several centres we held all-day prayer meetings. Prayer was answered; enemies confessed their faults and became reconciled; hearts were warmed with new love and zeal and souls were saved. I was permitted to receive on profession of faith sixty-seven. Of this number, one man is eighty three years of age, two seventy-six and one seventy-three. This makes eighty I have been permitted to receive the past four months. Others are asking for baptism and seem near the kingdom. Thirty-five children have been baptized and two men were restored to church membership. The name of every member, including all the baptized children, were recorded in a book, and the sum placed opposite each name which was willingly pledged to be paid monthly for the support of the gospel. Many of our people have no property, and live from day to day, and almost literally as the birds live; yet every one contributed something and wished the blessing promised to the cheerful giver. The aggregate sum contributed would support three native preachers in addition to one already supported by our church at Chefoo. In addition to the above contributions, many have contributed liberally for the support of Christian education and for church repairs, etc.

I have now under my special care organized work extending over five counties. The preachers, as a rule, have a special, definite work assigned. Usually two men work together, preaching regularly at four or five market towns, and visiting regularly all the towns and villages, distributing books and tracts in the territory to which they have been assigned. They keep a daily record of the places visited and the work done. When I enter the county, I expect all the preachers in that county to meet me for special conference and prayer and examination on the Scriptures and work I have previously assigned them, and to assist in holding protracted meetings at any centre where there may be Christian inquirers or special promise. And then arrangements are made for work until I next visit the field. All our preachers are greatly encouraged by finding so many ready to listen to the

preaching and to read Christian books. We are in desperate need of a much larger number of consecrated, humble and Christ-loving workers. I rode across a rich and thickly populated district, more than sixty miles, where as yet we have no preachers. At present this field is practically uncultivated. More than twenty-five years ago I traveled extensively over all that district and with native helpers sowed seed which I trust will soon produce a rich harvest, and certainly would if we had workers to occupy the field. Our schools are prospering and we hope from these to secure many God-called and God-qualified men to preach and win souls.

LETTER FROM REV. J. S. THOMAS.

PRAA, LAOS.

Dear Friends:—Seven weeks ago to-day we left for our mountain retreat because of the awful heat and because immediately on our return from our tour to Ta It we had fever. This is our fifth hot season in Laos and the first one in which we have left our work for rest. Last year was our first year on the mountains, but then we went down daily to the villages to work. And this year, as you will see further on, we found opportunity for work in the mountain villages nearby. . . . We, all three of us, were feeling so poorly that each got on old Jumbo and for three days our bodies were swayed to and fro to his steady tread. We arrived to find Mr. Shields already planted at the mouth of the Hooie Poo (*Spring Creek*—because it *springs* out from the base of the mountain), in a delightfully cool and pleasant place. Mr. Shields' children were all sick in Praa, but there they played in the water daily—well and hearty. Across the stream we pitched our tent, and in a few days, through the kindness of our surprised neighbors, we had a thatch roof over our tent—our home for about five weeks. We called the place “Hooie Poo Falls,” because the little stream of clear, cold water is a succession of water-falls only a few yards apart and varying from two to fifty feet high. The water is surcharged with limestone, which is deposited on the overhanging branches and sticks, thus forming beautiful stalactites which in time become solid, the wood becoming petrified. These many stalactites, with the ferns, palms and bananas which line its banks on either side, and the dense forests of lofty trees as a background, make the little mountain stream throughout its entire length of about four miles, with its waters rolling and tumbling and roaring down those hundreds of cataracts, a spot of beauty and joy. Add to this the fact that in the forests were wild elephants, wild cattle, deer, monkeys, apes, tigers, etc., and you may imagine we were liv-

ing in a wild but picturesque place. The apes were daily visitors of ours, entertaining us with their weird calls and sprightly gymnastics in the lofty trees. There were three or four families of them in our neighborhood. We enjoyed many meals of fine venison brought to us by our neighbor hunters. They brought to us other wild meat—for instance, the porcupine. A true and remarkable story is told of this little animal which I will here record for the children. The little fellow is fond of bananas, but they grow so high that he cannot hope to reach them. So while he sits at the base of the banana tree, longingly looking up at them, he, with unerring aim, deliberately shoots his quills at the banana stem till he cuts it, and the bunch drops at his feet, when he and his family at once enjoy a good meal. . . . While the sun's heat away from these dense shades was something terrific this year, owing to the long drought of last year, in this spot the thermometer ranged between 75° and 85° F. During our stay there we made the acquaintance of all the people in the little villages in a radius of half an hour's walk from camp. Many with divers diseases came to see the writer—most of whom were relieved. This had a strong tendency to remove all fear and prejudice and to open the way for the better things we had in store for them. None of them had ever heard of Jesus. After many visits we introduced to them the Saviour of the world—their personal Saviour. Toward the last of our stay we held services at the homes of the “head men” of the villages—they inviting all the people to their homes. From twenty-five to forty people attended each service. The story of creation, of our first parents, of the flood, the prophets, of the birth and life, the resurrection and the second coming of the Saviour, was intensely interesting to them, as their peculiar grunt of surprise and assent so often indicated. As a result of these meetings they asked for literature, which we gladly furnished to them. The meetings were really sunrise prayer meetings, as the people went early to their rice fields. (The mountain rice is planted two months earlier than rice in the plain. They clear off a small place in the woods, make little holes in the ground, drop in the rice and it is done till harvest. The entire village turns out to help, first one and then another. This because the people are peculiarly gregarious and because of fear of wild beasts. They know nothing of trade except by barter. They gather their own cotton, spin and weave the single garment they wear, gather their food from the forests around. They raise only their rice and feed a few pigs. Then they are separate and away from and independent of the outside world.) . . . By such meetings and private talks we have sown the gospel