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Board of Foreign Missions.

Choctaw Mission.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE REV. JAMES B.
RAMSEY.

The following communication is dated at Spencer Academy, July 16, 1846. The account which it gives of the Examination, Addresses, &c.; and also of the Examination of the Girls' School, under the care of the Rev. C. Kingsbury, of the American Board, will all be found interesting, and valuable as showing the rapid progress of the Choctaws in Christian civilization.

Our examination came off the day before yesterday, Tuesday, much to the satisfaction, I believe, of all parties. The evening before a great many people had arrived, besides the trustees, the chiefs and head men; and during the morning they kept coming in from all directions, almost every one leading another horse for one of the boys to ride home; so that at dinner we had above 150 guests. We had killed, the afternoon before, a beef, three hogs, and two sheep, which together with a moderate quantity of bacon, had nearly all disappeared the next evening. There were a number of gentlemen and some ladies from Doaksville and Fort Towson present; among others Col. Pitchlynn's two daughters, and sister-in-law. Capt. Jones also, who you aware is one of our trustees, a very intelligent man, and of polished manners, and a partner of Mr. H., brought his family along in a very handsome coach—the only thing of the kind I have yet seen in the nation. Our exercises commenced about 7 1-2 o'clock, and continued, with about an hour's recess for dinner, until about three. The school room, which however is intolerably small, was crowded all the time, but not a fourth part of the people were in at once that would have been had our accommodations been better.

The classes first examined belonged to Mr. Dwight's department, whose sole duty since I came has been to teach the English language to those who cannot speak it. As we have had no books suited for this, it has required great labour on the part of the teacher; and the examination, which was a sample of the daily teaching, was conducted simply by giving the names of various

objects in Choctaw, and requiring from the scholars the English;—repeating short sentences in Choctaw, and requiring a translation in English, and some conversation. This was by no means an uninteresting part of the examination, though it was brief.

From most of this our trustees were absent; being engaged with the chiefs and captains and head men in preparing and signing a memorial to Congress against the extension of the criminal laws of the United States over the whole Indian territory, in matters between Indian and Indian, as well as between Indians and white men, which they had been informed it was proposed to do, and which they strongly in their memorial deprecate, as a very great injury, and a gross injustice, though they scarcely thought it possible that such a thing could be seriously designed. 'Even should it be necessary in the case of the Cherokees,' say they, 'why should we be visited for the sins of our neighbours? We can govern ourselves,—we have a feeling of national pride in this thing,—we are trying all we can to improve ourselves, and to elevate the mass of our people,—why now threaten to deprive us not only of a just right solemnly guaranteed to us, but also of one of our strongest incentives to self-improvement.' I could not but sympathize with them deeply,—though I think still there must be some misunderstanding as to the design of the United States government.

The classes taught by Mr. Bissell were next examined. These had been studying reading, writing, arithmetic, (Emerson's 1st and 2d part) and Geography, (Parley's and Smith's.) Then came on the department taught by Mr. Wright, who has occupied the place of the first teacher since I came. These were examined in geography, arithmetic, (Emerson's third part.) natural philosophy, history of the United States, algebra, Latin reader; after which I examined one boy in Horace, who had been reciting to me since I came. Occasionally between the classes we had a speech or two from some boys previously appointed to prepare, which tended somewhat to vary the exercises, and add to their interest. All at the close appeared pleased, and freely expressed their approbation.

After the examinations were through, and we went through them very rapidly,—the people, students, trustees, and all, were assembled under the shade of some trees at the end of one of the Academy buildings, where I had Colton's large Missionary Map hung up, and mounted on a little stage. I talked to them all a little while from this; pointing out the various conditions in relation to religion and civilization, of the various portions of the earth's population; and showing that all those parts which were in ignorance and misery were those who were destitute of the Bible; that all the enlightened parts were those where the Bible was read; that every people who read it and obeyed it were a great people, and had great knowledge in all other subjects; all the wise and powerful and happy nations of the earth were those, and none but those who have and read the Bible. I showed them that the people who speak the English language, and who occupied so small a part of the world, were nevertheless the people who held the great power of the world, and possessed the greatest part of its wisdom and knowledge; that knowledge they could thus see for themselves was power; and that that power was to be obtained by Christianity alone. I then told them that the only way for the Choctaw nation to become a great and wise and happy and respected people, was to go on in the way they had so nobly begun, in endowing schools for the religious education of all their boys and girls, and in receiving the religion of Jesus Christ, and in reading the Bible, the word of the great God.

After I had done, Mr. Dwight interpreted the substance of it in Choctaw. He is by the way a very good and graceful speaker, and would make an excellent preacher to his people, were it not that his throat is affected with scrofulous humours which threaten to be a serious bar to his ever speaking much in public; indeed he has scarcely been able to bear the talking necessary for conducting the exercises of the school room.

After this was through, I read out and explained a series of regulations for the next session, involving so complete a change in the management of the internal affairs of the institution, I mean its government, and the restrictions laid on the students, who in almost all things except their lessons, and to too great a degree there, would like to do very much as they please, that I felt it to be a matter of importance that the students and all others should be aware before they left, what they must expect; and told them that out of a regard to their best interests and to the best interests of the Choctaw people, we felt it necessary to establish and to enforce with all kindness and decision these rules. . . . They relate both to teachers and scholars, and to the regulation of the conduct of the latter in all their employments and relations. They are not numerous, but compre-

hensive, and meet with the full approval of all the teachers, and of the trustees also I believe. After Mr. Dwight had interpreted the substance of these rules, we closed our part of the exercises by a prayer by Mr. Carr, a Methodist minister.

Col. Harkins, one of the trustees, then rose, and after making a few remarks in Choctaw, invited Col. Deflore, the chief of this district, to address the people. He was followed by Col. Fisher, the chief of the upper or Arkansas district; and he by Mr. McKinney, one of our trustees, who is also Maj. Armstrong's interpreter. After which Capt. Hudson gave a speech, which I learned from Mr. Dwight was a very good one indeed; he is a very able, strong-minded Indian, was instructed in Mr. Kingsbury's school in the Old Nation, and though not a professor of religion, is one of the very warmest supporters of the schools and of temperance. He spoke with real Indian energy and eloquence of gesture. Mr. McKinney appeared to be also a good speaker. All these speeches were in Choctaw, and of course unintelligible to me.—Their general drift, as I learned from Mr. Dwight, was to show the advantages of education, and to enlist the feelings of all in behalf of the schools; and as addressed to the boys, recommending diligence and obedience, &c. Col. Harkins closed with a few remarks, and the company began to scatter, and such a scattering,—and saddling of horses, and running hither and thither, and shaking of hands and packing of saddle-bags, you never saw, or rather I never saw; and in less than two hours, though it was after four o'clock considerably when they finished speaking, there were scarcely twenty students and strangers together, and it appeared truly desolate. They seemed nearly all determined to start off, if they could only go five or six miles, and camp out, which by the way is the common custom. From some of these boys we parted with not a little concern,—some who appeared amiable and desirous to improve, and whose minds were rather seriously disposed,—lest the absence of two months and a half from all the privileges they had enjoyed, and freedom from the restraints to which they were here subjected, and exposure to strong temptations and heathenish influences, should entirely obliterate all the impressions already made, and the improvement but just commenced. We endeavoured to commit them all, however, to the care of Him, who, we love to think, has among them some vessels of mercy, who shall be to the praise of his glory. Some five or six students wished to remain and work during the vacation, and as there will be much work to do, we shall keep them. Two of those now here are two who joined Mr. Wright's church last winter; one of them can converse some in English, the other none at all.

On Monday evening, the evening before the examination, I got the trustees together, Col. Harkins, Capt. Jones, and Mr. Thompson McKinney. (all who were here, Col. Pitchlynn and Maj. Armstrong being in the east.) and first read to them your letter of instructions, with which they were well pleased, and then consulted freely with them upon the best methods of carrying out the designs proposed. I found them very cordial and ready to enter with interest into any plans for the improvement of matters, feeling that things had not succeeded here as they ought to have done. I laid before them the state in which I found the finances of the Academy, desiring to know what I should do, and what the Board were to expect. They were entirely ignorant of the real condition of things, and were much surprised when I informed them that all the \$8,000 income of the present year was, as nearly as I could learn, used up before I arrived, and in all probability rather more; that \$5,000 of it had been actually paid out in the early part of the year, for debts contracted the year before,—(the financial years being calendar years.) I told them, indeed, they themselves, if I mistake not, first mentioned it, that it would be necessary to have more force here, two or three more families at least, if we were to succeed at all in getting along with the institution,—but reminded them that there was no place to stow them away when they did come, except by appropriating to them some of the boys' rooms; that the school house was entirely unfit for the purposes of such an institution, and was a very great obstacle indeed to introducing many important improvements; that the dining room and kitchen were entirely too small and ill-constructed, and a serious obstacle to introducing any improvements there; the storehouses were all poor; that the superintendent's house needed new roofing;—that the wash house was good for nothing;—and one of the houses for the students was decaying very much and needed considerable repairs;—that a carpenter shop was much needed; and yet that unless something were done to relieve the institution from its present difficulties, not one of these things could be done, though all ought to be done as soon as possible. They said it would be hard to expect the institution to be carried on with energy and success by the Board in such circumstances, and unjust; and they agreed that as soon as I could ascertain the exact condition of the money matters, I should inform them, and they would endeavour to get an additional appropriation of a few thousands from some other funds, several of which they spoke of; and if this could not be done, they thought it would be necessary to suspend the institution, i. e., to delay the commencement of the next term until the funds had sufficiently accumulated. So the matter now stands; what is to be done? It is

impossible to get along with a school of 100 boys with the present accommodations, much better than heretofore; some repairs and additions we must have indeed to get along at all. I shall await an answer from the Board on this subject with some anxiety, when I shall have laid before you more fully the state of affairs, as I hope to do, perhaps ere I have closed this communication.

July 22d.—I found it impossible to get this ready for the last mail, and hence have delayed closing it, finding much to occupy my time and attention. The day after the examination, I went down to Mr. Kingsbury's, to the examination of his school; this you are aware is a girl's school, and close by Doaksville. The examination commenced between 8 and 9 o'clock; I, in company with Mr. Bissel and Dwight arrived a little while after they had commenced, and was much pleased with the promptness and correctness with which they answered the questions proposed to them. Indeed I believe that no company of white girls could have stood an examination better. It was a cheering sight, to see nearly fifty of these girls, thus trained up under religious influences, and growing in useful knowledge, and a large number of their fathers and mothers present, looking on and listening with countenances of deep and lively interest. The examination was not on special parts of their studies,—*lessons prepared for the examination*, but promiscuously on all they had studied for the whole term; and very seldom indeed was any mistake made. Specimens were then shown of their work in plain sewing and fancy needlework, some of which were very pretty.

After the examination, which occupied some three hours or more, we had a series of speeches from the chiefs and trustees and other head men. The trustees called upon me to give them an address, which I of course tried to do; said a few words to the girls, and talked to the rest about the importance of combining religion with learning; that it was not enough to give their children the knowledge of reading, writing, arithmetic, &c., they must give them good principles if they were to become truly happy and useful;—that education consisted of two things, the one, the imparting of knowledge, the other, teaching how to use that knowledge. The first without the last was only to give a man tools, without teaching him how to use them; the last could only be done properly by the Gospel. Col. Folsom, one of their principal men, gave a very good speech in English, rather broken indeed, but not the less interesting. He urged the girls not to forget the things they had learned at school, as too many he was sorry to say had, and gone back to the habits of their forefathers, and thrown all they had been taught behind their back. He attributed all the advancement his people had made to the influence of the Gospel, it is

and expressed for himself and people a lively gratitude to the missionaries; but with great energy and keeness warned them all against another very different kind of white men, who were, he said, the greatest curse of the Indians, who sold whiskey, and got drunk themselves and cheated and swore, and thus set to them such bad examples. For my part, said he, all I wish is that our chiefs and the agent would send every one of them out of the nation at once. After closing with prayer we went to dinner, and during the afternoon all dispersed. Mr. Kingsbury has just completed a school-room, or rather just got it enclosed, it is not completed, which is larger than two of ours, though they have only half the number of pupils.

I should have been pleased to have visited all the schools and witnessed the examinations, but could not. You are aware that the time of these examinations is appointed by the trustees, and so appointed that they can have just time to pass in order from one school to another, till they have gone the full rounds. Spencer was this year the first examined. The time for the commencement of the term in all the schools is fixed by them also, and has been I believe permanently fixed by them on the 1st of October, in all the schools. They seem to take a very lively interest in the schools, and in the progress of their people in useful knowledge.

China Missions.

A CIRCULAR FROM THE MISSIONARIES AT NINGPO.

General View of the Missionary Work in China—Names and Stations of the Protestant Missionaries—History of the Presbyterian Mission.

We have received a copy of a Letter that has been prepared and printed by some of our missionary brethren in China, in order to be sent to their friends at home. As it contains information of general interest, we insert it without any omissions, excepting of the Chinese type.

Ningpo, January 1st, 1846.

Among the visions of the beloved disciple, in the isle that is called Patmos, was one of an angel or messenger flying in the midst of heaven; having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Rev. xiv. 6. It seems to be admitted by all, that this vision, which immediately precedes that of the fall of Babylon, and the establishment of Christ's kingdom on the earth, relates to the missionary operations of our own times. The flight of the angel commenced, it may be, with the first preaching of the gospel in the extreme West, by such men as Eliot, Mayhew, Brain-

erd and the Moravians in America, and Hans Egede in Greenland. From thence, stretching farther and farther eastward to Africa, India, Burmah, the South Sea Islands, and the Indian Archipelago, it has reached the doors of the Chinese empire. One flight yet farther East, to the populous but unknown kingdom of Japan, and the prophecy will have received its accomplishment, for there will then remain no great nation which shall not have heard the gospel, and the warning "Fear God, and give glory to him for the hour of his judgment is come." When that farther flight shall be taken, it is not for us to say, though, if a conjecture may be hazarded, it cannot be far distant.

Pausing here, where the flight of the angel of mercy is for the present arrested, let us consider the missionary aspect of China, the labourers engaged, and a summary of the operations of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America, in behalf of the Chinese.

The fame of China is in all lands, but accurate knowledge respecting the country and people is rare. She has long been a sealed book, even to the learned, being shut out from the rest of the world by moral and physical obstacles, and a language, the study of which is a weariness to the flesh. Ancient she is, but her records do not reach so far back as the deluge, and are worthy of little confidence prior to the time of the Hebrew prophet Isaiah; while down even to the times of Alexander the Great or the Maccabees, they are so meagre as to afford little satisfaction to the reader. The extent of her dominion is so vast, that no nations except Russia and England can be compared with her. Besides China proper, it includes Chinese Tartary, which is nearly as large as Asiatic Russia, and she exercises a nominal authority over Corea, Cochin China and Thibet. Her population is commonly estimated at three hundred and sixty millions. Even at the estimate of two hundred millions, which is thought by some to be nearer the truth, it is twice as vast as that of the entire continent of Africa, nearly as large as that of all the nations of Europe, six times as great as that of North and South America, and Taou Kwang commands more subjects than any other mortal.

The religious sects of China are chiefly three,—that of Confucius, that of Laou-tsz', or the sect of Taou, and the Buddhists. The first, which is the state religion, is a species of refined infidelity, and is confined chiefly to the officers of government and the literati. It is said in the Four Books, (the Bible of China,) that when one of the disciples of Confucius asked respecting the state of man beyond the grave, he replied, "Since we are unable to know life, how can we know death?" and in another place it is said,—"The sage (Confucius) did not speak of