

The Foreign Missionary.

Missions of the Presbyterian Church.

A Journey in Brazil.

THE Rev. A. L. Blackford sends us the following article from Rio de Janeiro, under date of January 22d. It relates to his journey to the Province of Minas Gerais, and his sojourn at one of its chief cities for several weeks :

I left Rio Nov. 14th. Two hours' travel by steamer brought us to the opposite side of the bay, where we took the cars, and in twenty minutes more were at the foot of the Serra. Thence we ascended by coach the remaining eleven miles to Petropolis. Here I found that, notwithstanding all the care I could give and the most explicit promises of the agents, part of my baggage had been left behind. This involved a day's delay, contrary to my wishes.

I spent the 15th in seeing Petropolis, which I had not before visited. It is 40 miles from Rio, and located in the valleys of the mountains at about 2,700 feet above the sea. The Emperor and Court reside here during the hot season ; and also some of the diplomats. It is considered a safe and pleasant retreat from the heat of Rio and the coast. A German colony of several thousands, is here located on lands belonging to the Emperor. These Germans have a Protestant church, but are now without a pastor, and have been for some time. Of their general condition or prospects I learned nothing.

On the 16th a ride of 100 miles in twelve hours, by coach brought us to Juiz de Fara. The country through which we passed is rugged and romantic, thin-

ly populated and poorly cultivated. A Brazilian farmer who rode with me for several hours, informed me that many plantations were going into decay for want of labourers. This same complaint of want of labourers, is made wherever I have been. The *slave* population is rapidly decreasing since none can be imported, and comparatively very few are brought up on the plantations. The road over which we passed is one of the best possible turnpikes ; and has within a year or two past, to this distance from the coast, superceded the slow and toilsome mode of travel and transportation on mule back, over mountain paths. Yet many Brazilians are wholly skeptical as to its utility. At Juiz de Fara the company which own this road, have settled a colony of 1,200 Germans. It has been planted only two or three years. About one half are Protestant and the other Roman Catholic. Each class has its own school-house and master.

The Protestants have a Sunday-school also. They are anxious to secure a minister and offer to pay 1,200 milreis per year (\$600, or more) and furnish a house to any one who will come to them as their pastor. But as Bro. Schneider has visited them, I leave any fuller report to him. I would say further, that Mr. F. Kufa, the secretary and general agent of the company at this point, takes a most active and generous interest in the welfare of his countrymen. I was indebted to his generosity for the loan of a mule for my journey further interior, and also for a free pass on the diligence to Petropolis as I returned.

The native town of Juiz de Fara has

perhaps from one to two thousand inhabitants. Its only attractive feature is a pleasant location. Here, after half a dozen fruitless attempts, I succeeded in getting a Portuguese merchant to take Bibles for sale on my account. I was told by others that they had been condemned as false and dangerous, and their circulation was prohibited. As I came back, months after, this man said he had sold one copy only. Mr. Kufa also took books, both German and Portuguese, for sale and distribution.

From Juiz de Fara onward there are no public conveyances. Starting my baggage by ox-wagons, I mounted my mule, Nov. 22d, for the town of Barbacena, 60 miles further north. I carried in my saddle-bags some Testaments and tracts, which I distributed by the way. Some seemed to receive them gladly, others would not have them at all. Stopped for the night at a village of perhaps 30 or 40 houses. They had here a church and two priests, but no school of any kind. I encountered one of the priests at the inn. He was a young Italian from Naples, and only two months in Brazil. When told that I was a Protestant minister, he looked at me with the incredulous astonishment of one who had suddenly come upon something of which he had heard, but which he did not wish to encounter. He was, however, courteous, and our interview amicable, notwithstanding some discussion on points of religion. He said he would receive no Protestant books, as he did not wish to read anything of the kind. Among other things he seemed confidently persuaded that Protestantism was very nearly extinct in England. Going next morning into the store attached to the inn to pay my bill, the boy in attendance eyed me very curiously, and finally said, "So you don't believe in praying to the saints and Virgin." I replied that I believed Christ was the only intercessor, and worshipped only God. He thought I must be in great peril if I did not seek the protection of the Virgin and the saints. I distributed here one or two Testaments and some tracts. I reached Barbacena the 23d. and remained till the 29th.

About 15 miles before reaching this place the road crosses a range of mountains, called the Serra de Mantiqueira. To the north of this range lie the im-

mense *campos*, or grass fields, of Brazil. It is very sparsely populated. In some places for several miles not a house will be seen, either on or in sight of the road.

Barbacena is a town of 3,000 to 4,000 inhabitants. It is about 5,000 feet above the sea, in latitude 21° south. It has a delightful and very healthy climate. It has several schools, four or five churches and three priests. I here arranged with a merchant to take and sell books for me. He said he would do any thing he could to circulate them, though he doubted if any would be bought; that a few years since an agent had been there and sold some, but the vicar had denounced them and forbidden their sale. This was an intelligent man, who laughed at what he himself styled the *absurdities* of Romanism, but he was evidently much afraid of any priestly denunciation. I distributed some Testaments and tracts, and besides sold a few Bibles and a number of Testaments, other books and tracts, to two young men whom I met in the hotel where I stopped. They wished them to carry to the village where they resided, 40 miles distant. The motive, I suppose, for the purchase, was what they hoped to gain by their sale. I left some tracts with my landlord, who, on my return, said he had given them all away and wished more for the same purpose.

Here I hired a guide and two additional mules to take me to San Joao del Rei, a distance of 45 or 50 miles. Much of the way we followed mere mule paths through the *campos*. Only here and there about among the valleys did any woodland appear. None but this woodland is ever cultivated. The rest is devoted entirely to the pasturage of cattle, horses and mules, of which this province furnishes large numbers for market. We stopped over night at a small village, where I could only give away a few tracts. No one seemed willing to take even a New Testament on any terms.

Nov. 30th I reached San Joao del Rei. This is reckoned one of the chief cities of the Province of Minas Geraes. I heard its population reckoned at from 4,000 to 8,500 souls. Such is the accuracy of Brazilian statistics; or to speak more properly—conjectures; for no census is ever taken in Brazil. The lower figures I judge nearer the truth. In

point of intelligence and educational facilities, the citizens of this place reckon themselves foremost in the province, if not in the empire. There is here a college for young men, having an attendance of over one hundred. The course is only moderately extended, and employs six or seven professors. There are also three female boarding-schools, as many public schools, and two or three private schools for children. These, I believe, in fact give the opportunities of education to all who here wish to embrace it. One object of my journey being to study and practice the language, I had proposed to remain in this city for a few weeks.

Dr. Lee, an English Physician, residing here, and to whose wife I had a letter of introduction from a friend of one of my acquaintances in Rio, furnished rooms for me in one of his houses, and put them at my disposal during my pleasure to remain. Though a professed Catholic, he showed me the greatest generosity during my sojourn of six weeks in this place.

I made without difficulty very satisfactory arrangements for a teacher in Portuguese. But at the outset I met the most discouraging prospect for Bible distribution. I was assured by Dr. Lee, and the English professor in the college, a Protestant, that no one would buy or even wish to receive the Scriptures. When Mr. Carfield, the agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society was here, three or four years since, he sold very large numbers of Bibles. The vicar of the parish attempted to stop his work, but the delegado refused to allow any interference. A few days after Mr. Carfield's departure, however, the vicar issued an order that all these Bibles should be burned, saying the bishop of the province had so commanded. Nearly all were actually burned, and, as I understand, in the presence of the vicar. A very few persons only dared to resist the order.

It was alleged that the Bibles were *falsified*, and were *blasphemous*, because they spoke of Jesus as the *first-born son* of Mary, and not the *only-begotten*. And this too in the face of the fact that the Bibles in question were exactly their own version—wanting the Apocrypha—made from the Vulgate, and that the Vulgate itself always uses the word *Pri-*

mogenitus, in reference to Christ as the son of Mary. There can be no doubt that many were moved by this lying representation of the bishop and vicar, to commit this outrageous act, but the greater part, I doubt not, did it only from fear of excommunication. One young man who received a Bible from me, and said he would read it, told me he was afraid to let the priests know that he had it or read it, for fear of being excommunicated.

During the six weeks stay in the city I was able to sell neither Bible nor New Testament, nor could I get any one to take them on sale. I however distributed a few copies among persons with whom I was acquainted, as well as some other books and tracts. A man who kept a book-store purchased some small books and tracts for sale. He said he would take copies of the Scriptures, but it was absolutely of no use, as people were afraid to buy. He showed me a dozen New Testaments, which he had had on hand for some years, without being able to sell a single copy. Such is the state of things in a community which claims, and that truly, to have many intelligent men. Indifference, and the fear of men whom they universally and most heartily despise, not only prevents their reading the word of God, but led them to an act of most disgraceful barbarity. I made the acquaintance of the vicar and three other priests. At first they were very courteous, but afterwards, with one exception, they became very reserved. Two of them paid me a visit; for what purpose, exactly, I could never make out. In a discussion on the right of the people to read the Scriptures, I was informed that even the priests could read no Protestant book without a special permit from the bishop. And these two men, though they seemed desirous to learn something of our belief, would not even receive a tract at my hands. This is spiritual and mental slavery sufficiently strong and debasing to serve even the Pope.

After being here something over a month, I met the vicar on the street one morning, when he accosted me quite angrily, saying he understood I was selling *false* Bibles, and that I *should not* do it. I replied, I had Bibles and would sell them unless prevented by law—by Brazilian law. He said ecclesiastical

law prohibited, and he was going to complain to the delegado. I told him to do so, and we would see what the delegado would say. Knowing the delegado, and that he vaunted himself on his liberal opinions, I intended to test them on his action in this case. But I found, on calling at his house, that he was away and would not return for some days. I was, however, told that he would no doubt have done the vicar's bidding, as they were warm friends, and he was a man in whom no dependance could be placed. The next day I was informed by the acting sub-delegado that the vicar had entered his complaint to him; and that if necessary he would interfere to prevent the circulation of Bibles. I asked him how he could undertake to do this, when in the Provinces of Rio de Janeiro and San Paulo, Bibles were sold without restraint; and in Para, where they had attempted to do so, they could not prohibit the sale of such books. He said this arose either from the indifference of the authorities or a different view of the law, but that he should execute the law on his own interpretation. This is a great evil, and one of the chief dangers to us of the Brazilian system—the arbitrary power of the officials in executing the law in all the latitude of their own views; while redress can only be obtained by the influence of powerful friends, or of money. There is said to be scarcely an exception to the basest official corruption. I replied to the delegado that as, in fact, no one would buy books, I was not at that time disposed to test the matter further than his decision. He asked for a Bible, saying he wished to examine for himself, and see if the charges of falsification were true. His request was granted. I supposed the vicar would make a public denunciation of my books and myself; but I heard nothing of it if he did.

I made the acquaintance of a good many persons while here; all knew that I was a Protestant and a minister; some would stare at me, as if I were a remarkable curiosity, but, with the exception of the priests, no one ever treated me unkindly. Even the sub-delegado was truly polite.

I was often asked very amusing questions about Protestantism; as, if we believed in one God? etc. One young man, who even laid some claims to liter-

ature, said he never knew before that any body had a belief different from the Roman Catholic Church.

This Province is one of the most important in the empire; claims over 1,000,000 inhabitants, which are generally regarded as among the most enterprising of the nation. It is wholly interior, and very little is there known of the outer world. A newspaper published in Sano Joa scarcely gives a single item of news in regard to the most stirring events of the day. The only two Englishmen I met in the province—the one a Romanist and the other a Protestant—regarded all missionary efforts there, as not only useless but absurd. In view of the actual state of things, I do not wonder that such should be the opinion of mere men of the world, who ignore the promises and purposes of God for the conversion of the world, and the power of the gospel and the Holy Ghost to renew and reform men's hearts and lives. The moral debasement is fearful in the extreme. It would be both offensive to you and useless to all to enter into details. I heard many facts which show that there is not a single vice or crime with which the apostle Paul charges the ancient heathen world, that does not prevail here. The very same causes are at work, too, for with all their forms of Christianity, they are as basely idolatrous—forgetting God, they worship and serve the creature more than the Creator. The priests are among the basest and worst. There are, no doubt, exceptions with them, as among the people, but they are few. Notwithstanding all this, God may have some chosen ones here who are taught to feel their way to the cross of Christ amid all this rubbish and darkness. One I knew who seemed to me such.

Does any one ask what are the prospects for the triumphs of the gospel here? I answer—dark, as depravity, and sin, and the hatred of man can make them; but on the other hand, as Judson once said, "bright as the promises of God," and sure as his eternal counsels. True, this part of Brazil seems for the present to forbid open and active evangelical effort, but of this the church must not complain till she has her men ready for that special work and field. In almost every part, no doubt, more or less opposition will have to be

met and overcome; and he who goes in the van-guard may have a fierce conflict with priestly and satanic wrath. The Master does not teach us to expect less; but he does teach us to look for the final triumph in all.

The propriety of any special, local, or permanent effort for the present in this part is not apparent. There are numerous other points which, it seems to me, should be first occupied. Bible distribution, where it can be done, seems to me desirable as a first work. I had sometimes almost doubted of this measure, but facts seem to favour it as a rule. When missionary labour once begins to show fruit here, I believe its development will be rapid. The degree of education which many enjoy, is work ready done to hand. Many young men of education and talents need only the knowledge of the truth and the grace of God in the heart, to make them very soon teachers of others. Wherever the written word is spread abroad the Spirit of God can make it the power of God and wisdom of God unto salvation. It is the power of the Holy Ghost that is now needed to move and prepare the hearts of men, and seal his truth to their salvation. As our acquaintance with the country is extended, I trust both means and opportunities for influence will be multiplied.

Except progress in the language, and more knowledge of the country, I can show but little result of my journey. I trust there may be more than I am now able to count on.

Early in December the rainy season set in, the roads became very bad, and some places streams were swollen and dangerous to cross much of the time. I deemed it best not to make a further advance, as I first intended, of 150 miles further, to visit the cities of Auro Preto and Marro Velho, which are the largest of the province.

Jan. 13th, I started home by the same route and means as I had travelled outward. I could give some very amusing as well as trying incidents of the way, but I pass them by; save, that once we had to make a long circuit through wood and field to avoid a swollen stream: a number of times our cargo mule got fast in the mud and fell down, when every thing had to be removed; and even then it was not always easy to

get the beast on foot again. In some places I did not dare to ride my own mule through the thick mud with uncertain bottom. In four days I reached Juiz de Fara, and by Saturday noon landed in Rio. God most mercifully kept me through all the way and many dangers; and I have scarcely looked or felt so strong since reaching Brazil as I do at present.

I had the misfortune to lose a very good mule a few days before starting home. It cost me altogether something over \$80. This we felt to be quite a loss, under present aspect of affairs.

Very truly yours, in Christ Jesus,

A. C. BLACKFORD.

How the Light Spreads.

A SHORT time ago Bro. Clemens and I were making a missionary tour together, and we visited a Belengi town where a missionary had never been before. After we had been a few minutes seated, the head man of the town, in whose house we were, brought in some honey, which is found in great abundance in the forests of Africa; he poured it out into a plate and set it on the ground before us. There was no table in the house, and perhaps no one in the town, so the plate of honey was set on the ground which formed the floor of the house. He then brought an iron spoon, and took two spoonfulls of the honey himself first before offering it to us. This was to show it was not poisoned. If a stranger comes into a native African town and a drink of water is given him, or any thing to eat or drink, the person offering it always takes a portion first to show that there is no fetich or poison that will do the stranger harm. It would have been considered discourteous had we not partaken of the honey which was offered us in hospitality. Without any hesitation, we took the rusty iron spoon by turns and partook of the honey. Wild fruits were also set before us, of which we also partook. While thus enjoying the hospitality of the people we took occasion to speak to them of the true God, and of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. The town was small, and nearly all who lived in it were present. I asked them if they had ever heard of the Saviour before. "O yes," they replied, they "had heard