

The Foreign Missionary

for

Missions of the Presbyterian Church.

Mission Field in Southern Brazil.

LETTER OF THE REV. F. J. C. SCHNEIDER.

THE following letter was written at Limeira, March 8th. It will be found one of much interest.

. . . I took passage at Rio de Janeiro in a small Brazilian steamer, running between Rio and Santos. After a passage of thirty hours along the bold and rocky coast, we arrived at the latter city, distant about two hundred miles from the capital. It is an old, dingy-looking town of some ten thousand inhabitants, and of no importance except as one of the principal coffee ports of this empire. One planter, whose plantation is near where I am now writing, and is not so large as some others in the neighborhood, last year sent to Santos three million eight hundred and forty thousand pounds of coffee. Three thousand mules, the only means of transportation here, arrive at and depart daily from Santos at this season of the year. A railroad is in process of construction, thence to Sao Paulo, but owing to the mountainous nature of the country, and the careful construction it requires in order to prevent the heavy rains from washing it away, it will be years before it will be ready for the cars to run. The stock of this road is all owned in England. It will, when finished, probably not be a paying investment, so far as the earnings of the road are concerned, but the imperial and provincial governments have guaranteed the company seven per cent. upon their capital invested.

After I had remained a day at Santos, I started, on mule back, for Sao Paulo,

distant about thirty-eight miles. A few miles from Santos lie the mountains which must be ascended in order to reach the interior of the province. They are about two thousand feet high, and in some places nearly perpendicular. A good wagon road, well macadamized and gently ascending, had been built at fabulous expense up the sides, but the recent heavy rains had in some places washed away the entire road, and on others washed parts of the mountains down upon it. Travellers and muleteers are therefore obliged to ascend by an old path which zig-zags up in about eighty turns, and is so steep and narrow that, in order to lessen the liability to accidents, muleteers and other troops are permitted to ascend only in the forenoon and descend in the afternoon. The dense undergrowth permits you to obtain only occasional views of the country and ocean below, but these occasional views are very fine.

Roads in Brazil are nearly all, especially at this, the rain-season of the year, in a most wretched condition. They are under the care of the government, and government in general cares very little for them.

There are but few houses along them, and these have fewer accommodations; never a floor, except the ground, seldom a chair, but nearly always a hammock, in which the head of the family lies all day, thinking of nothing and doing nothing; but smokes, and perhaps occasionally exerts himself sufficiently to sell a glass of cachac, an intoxicating liquor made of sugar cane, or a little corn or some beans to a passing muleteer. Indolence, want of energy, aversion to ex-

ertion in any way, is the grand characteristic of nearly all Brazilians.

I reached Sao. Paulo upon the evening of the same day on which I left Santos. It is an old city, but beautifully situated on high table land, some two thousand feet above the level of the ocean. It contains about thirty thousand inhabitants, has a college, law school, orphan's asylum, a large boarding-school for boys, under the care of the Jesuits, and well conducted; several large churches, monasteries. But here, as everywhere else in Brazil, the churches are attended by scarcely any one, except upon some gala-day, when an imposing ceremony is to be performed. The Romish religion has lost nearly all power over the people, and were it not that baptism by a priest is necessary to preferment either in civil or military life, I think that even this would soon be neglected by many. Poor people, many of them cannot believe in the follies of their religion; nor, when they see what lives their priests lead, in its sanctifying power. But, as they have no bible, they know of none better, and therefore have none at all. This is absolutely and literally true of the vast majority.

There had formerly been a German congregation in S. Paulo, but the pastor, a rationalist, did not succeed in firmly establishing himself, and thus the congregation has again been scattered. The Germans are nearly all infidel and know little of the gospel and care less for it. I preached there once to a small audience, and was soon after called to account for saying that only true Christians could have a good hope of gaining heaven.

On the 10th of February I started for Campinas, distant from S. Paulo about sixty-nine miles, and containing about six thousand inhabitants; among them several hundred Germans, the more influential of them also infidel. I preached here three times to tolerably good audiences, and then, upon the 25th of February, departed for Limeira, where I now am. This is a small village of only about fifteen hundred inhabitants. It is distant from Campinas about thirty-six miles, making the distance hence to Santos, the nearest port, one hundred and forty-three miles. There are within a radius of about fourteen miles with this as a centre several thousand Germans, many of whom have been here ten years and have not, during that time, heard a single

sermon. They nearly all live in colonies numbering each from about eighty to several hundred persons. They are very poor, many of them being still in debt for their passage hither; are generally very ignorant; though the majority of them who came here are able to read, they have brought but very few books with them, and even these few are generally entirely neglected. Nearly all their children, except those who were old enough to have learnt something in Germany, know absolutely nothing of religion and very little indeed of anything pertaining to this world.

The parents know something of religion, but that consists almost entirely of very crude notions. They know that there is a God, but of the duties we owe him, they know nothing. Of the Sabbath they know nothing, except as a day to drink, come to town to trade or sell horses, or to visit the tavern. They believe that their children ought to be baptized, but have no true idea of what baptism is, and believe that it makes no difference who baptizes them, whether Catholic priest or Protestant minister. Many are anxious to partake of the Lord's Supper, and some have asked me to administer it, but it seems to me, that they regard the mere partaking very much in the light of an act by which their sins shall be pardoned and a title to heaven secured. They are all anxious that their children should learn, but depend upon a teacher to do all the teaching. I have as yet been here but a few days, and have travelled about and preached several times. Am going to-day to a colony to preach to-morrow, and shall further explore the field next week. Will you please send me the books, of which I enclose a list, as soon as you can? They are *very* much needed here, and I have no doubt that I could, if I had them now, sell them in a short time. Want of time compels me to close at present.

Yours in Christ,

F. J. C. SCHNEIDER.

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The Niffau Mission, Liberia.

BETTER PROSPECTS.

THREE graduates of the Ashmun Institute were ordained by the Presbytery of Newcastle, and sent to Liberia as missionaries in the summer of 1859. Two