

nursing would be incomplete without reference to a still higher gain—namely, the help thus afforded to the minister of the Gospel in his spiritual labours. No one who has not worked among the densely packed masses of a large town, can estimate the advantage of having that ground broken up by tender care for the physical wants. The way is prepared for the entrance

of the good seed of a higher life. It is a work which, to use the words of the late Bishop of Sodor and Man, “sympathises, civilises, and evangelises.” Such will doubtless be the effects wherever it is carried on, whether in India or in England. It bears Hope on its banner, and Faith and Charity follow in its train.

ADELAIDE ROSS.

A QUAKER MISSION IN MADAGASCAR.

BY A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.



A CHILDREN'S CLASS.



NATIVE MISSIONARIES.

IN June, 1867, Mr. Joseph S. Sewell arrived in the capital of Madagascar, accompanied by an American “Friend,” named Street, and his wife, and thus commenced the Quaker Mission to Madagascar, which has had growth and development since then. For years previously Mr. Sewell had been interested in Madagascar; his relationship to the Rev. W. Ellis may in part explain this. In

the course of time, Mr. and Mrs. Street left the island, but other Friends joined in the mission; Miss Gilpin in 1869, Mr. Henry E. Clark and Mr. W. Johnson in 1871, Mr. W. Wilson and Mr. H. F. Standing, and others later. Some have returned, for a time or permanently, but there are still fourteen adult members

of the Friends' Foreign Mission in Madagascar; and in the score of years that these members of the Society of Friends have been working in Madagascar, their organisation has grown, their work has extended, and they have had their part in the change which has come over the central provinces of this great island and its people.

After their arrival in Madagascar, Mr. Sewell and his colleague “consulted with the missionaries of the London Missionary Society as to the sphere of work in which they could most profit the mission generally,” and for a time they directed their efforts to education, teaching classes of young men, overseeing schools already formed, and giving instructions to the teachers, and thus a group of teachers was collected by Mr. Sewell, which became the nucleus of the school for men and boys at Ambohitavovo. When the late Queen “adopted Christianity,” the care of one of the churches in the capital began to be so often laid upon Mr. Sewell that he came to be considered the missionary in charge of it. In 1872 a printing office was opened; whilst with the increase in the number of missionaries, and the division into districts, one of very great dimensions has been assigned to the care and the oversight of the Friendly Missionaries. The nature and extent of the work may be better understood, if from conversation with one of the missionaries who has returned home, and

from other official sources, the following facts be stated.

"Our work in Madagascar," said my missionary friend, "is a district of Imerina, south-west of the capital, containing two thousand square miles. In it we have under our oversight some one hundred and thirty-nine congregations, with thirty-five thousand adherents, who attend a place of worship more or less regularly. A resident missionary is stationed in two central stations in the district, and the rest of the missionaries reside in Antananarivo. The educational work of the missionaries is enlarging. There are about fourteen thousand scholars in the schools of the district, besides two high schools at the capital, one for boys, the other for girls. In these schools science classes interest some of the more advanced scholars.

"Do we build up churches? We endeavour to do so. This has been the great aim of all the missionaries since the first Christian queen came to the throne. The missionaries try to act both as evangelists and teachers, and help the natives to mould

Church we direct our converts, and its members largely govern themselves in religious matters. The Churches of Imerina have their periodical meetings, and they unquestionably exercise a great influence for good.

"The social results of the missions generally in Madagascar?—Christianity has in many ways improved the social condition of the people, especially so in relation to polygamy, divorce, and immorality generally. It has not abolished slavery, it is true: there are thousands of slaves in the island; and all missionaries and other foreigners employ slaves, but they make their bargain with the slave, and do not recognise the "owner" at all. It is quite true that in Madagascar Christians hold slaves. We do not apologise for the slavery amongst the Malagasy; we dislike it; but the missionaries have no power to turn the slaveholders out of the Church. Christianity has had good social results in improving the ways and life of the people, the style of living, the



PREACHING IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

in the right way the National Malagasy Church, which, it should be understood, is not a State Church. The order of the services is something approaching that of the Congregational. A hymn-book is used—the Malagasy hymn-book—which is commonly used throughout the island. To that

training of children, and it must ultimately abolish the slavery.

"Is it true that the sale of intoxicating drinks increases in Madagascar?—Yes; especially on the coast, where a deal of rum is imported. In Imerina there are strict prohibitory laws; but these are often



A DISPENSARY.

evaded. There is more rum-drinking visible in some parts, and Creole traders are opening drink-shops; and the contact with Europeans is in some instances hurtful, and leads to the growth of the traffic in intoxicants, and necessarily to the increase in drunkenness."

Thus far, then, the story of the Madagascar mission of the Friends' Foreign Mission Association is told. For more than a score of years its agents have been at work in that island usefully. They did not go out to seek converts to Quakerism—they have made none; and they have not pressed the teaching of the

distinctive points in their belief. Their mission is to preach the Gospel, to teach the ignorant, and to help the nation to build itself up, with a hope that it may remain a free, self-governed people. They are giving a higher education in the capital; they are teaching Bible-classes, keeping up dispensaries, supporting nurses, battling with old superstitions in school, home, and sick-room; and on some of them there is "laid the care of all the churches" in a wide region. It has been a difficult task for these agents, for it is certain that hitherto the Society has had little to do with what may be called sustained missionary work in distant lands.

The Friends' Foreign Mission Association has extended the area of its operations since the mission to Madagascar was begun. It has now nearly thirty missionaries (male and female) in Madagascar, India, and China, whilst an allied organisation has its missionaries in Syria also. What its future may be, remains to be seen, for there are difficulties in addition to those before most missions. The area whence the subscriptions are drawn is limited, for the European members of the Society of Friends may be readily put as under twenty thousand, and it may be taken as a fact that the wealth of the Society does not increase. The traditions of the Society are not much in favour of a prolonged stay of ministers in a place; and there is the well-known view of the body as to the payment of ministers. These are the internal difficulties, which need not be dilated on. There are others in the class of the work; in the fact that the Society has a long and consistent testimony against slavery, war, and drink, to bear; and in the fact, also, that in Madagascar they were not the first in the field, and so have had to work side by side with the missionaries of the London Missionary Society, whose mission was commenced in 1820. But, on the other hand, this is believed to have been a blessing—the missionaries of the two Societies having worked harmoniously together.



"CHILDREN OF LIGHT."

BY THE REV. J. SUMMERHAYES, M.A., VICAR OF ST. JOHN'S, EALING DEAN.



NOTHING is more hateful to the majority of persons than the being in, and the being compelled to remain in, darkness. Those born blind, in whom the wise and loving Creator increases the quickness of other senses, especially the senses of hearing and touch, may know little of the discomfort and distress caused to others by being kept in the dark; but seeing people, when through some accident they are shut up in a dark

place, are possessed at once by a feeling of insecurity and helplessness. Every step is taken by them with a certain amount of hesitation and trembling; in their fear they stand still and irresolute, or they shuffle along slowly, with many a stumble and many a halt; and this not because they are cowards, or more than ordinarily timorous, but because in the dark they cannot tell at all where they are, or what is near them; for, as the Lord Jesus is recorded in the 35th verse of the twelfth chapter of St. John to have said, "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." And this feeling of doubt is most exquisitely