

## Correspondence.

## MISSION WORK IN SARAWAK AND THE MALAY PENINSULA.

SIR,

Correspondents writing to the *Straits Times* give, among other items, the following missionary news. "Father Jackson has returned after a lengthened stay in Europe, where by earnest efforts he has excited a good deal of attention to his mission in Borneo. He was accompanied by five Sisters of Mercy and a lay Brother. Father J. has purchased twenty-two acres of land on the Rock-road, opposite the present Roman Catholic grant, where he intends building a girls' school. A new chapel is also to be erected." From Kuching, the chief town of Sarawak, one writes "The Protestant church is strongly built of timber, where service is held twice on week days, and thrice on Sundays, including one by a Chinese Catechist. Bishop Hose preaches in English and Malay. Archdeacon Mesney courteously furnished information of the progress of the mission among the Dyaks and Chinese. At the mission school, near the Church, about eighty pupils attend as day scholars and boarders. There are eight European missionaries labouring, aided by native assistants. The oldest stations—among Dyaks and Chinese—are at Banting and Lundu." Father Jackson and his mission staff have met with marked success among the Dyaks; no less than thirty villages are under their influence. The furthest mission station is in British North Borneo. The Roman Catholic priests at Kuching are acknowledged to do their best on poor fare and scanty accommodation. The Malays are proof against missionary influence. The only effect of mission work among and around them is to make the Mohammedans more strict and zealous. The Chinese prove more open to mission influence, and overrun Kuching as much as they do Singapore. A Gambling Farm is a main source of revenue, yielding the government about thirteen thousand dollars a year. The vice flourishes in consequence, and only licensed gaming premises, taking up fine shop-houses, where play, open to all comers, goes on day and night. Rich Chinamen are said to gamble once a year, but poor ones whenever they can. Those best qualified to judge on the spot hold that gambling has no demoralising effect (!) whatever; owing to the honesty of the people, but deem at the same time that it would unfailingly prove mischievous and productive of crime to start a Gambling Farm in Singapore!

The whole of the *Malay Peninsula*, from Paksian, the Southern boundary of British Burma, to its extreme point, Cape Romania, in Johor, is absolutely without a single Protestant missionary; for the hundreds of thousands of Chinese scattered all over that land, who are variously estimated from 400,000 to 700,000, besides as many

other natives, Malays, Tamils, Siamese, Burmese and Jaccos—the aboriginal people of this region, true "men of the woods," quite a harmless, though down-trodden people. In the protected native states, which are virtually British territory, the Chinese far outnumber the Malays. These states are Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong; the rest of the states are under native rulers, the best known, and most enlightened of whom, is the Maharaja of Johor. He was when a youth placed by the British authorities under the care of the late Rev. B. P. Keasberry, who taught him English and much else besides. At Malacca, and at Thaipheng, in Perak, there are English chaplains. Also at Malacca, and at Larut, in Perak, there are Chinese Catechists at each place—the one in Malacca under the care of the S.P.G., the other in charge of the work long carried on by Mr. Marples, the treasurer of Perak. This station is occasionally visited by Mr. Macdonald of Penang. On the island of Junk, Ceylon, there is a Eurasian Christian, who endeavours to work for the Master among the Chinese there. But beyond thus "scraping the surface," all this vast field, so open on every side, lies untilled as far as the Protestant church is concerned. The E. P. mission is building a chapel at Jolior, on a site granted by the Maharaja. May the Lord hasten the day when Christian workers may be able to join hands with their brethren in Burma and Siam. I hope, some day, to give a short sketch of the work among the Chinese in Singapore and Penang.

FAIRPLAY.

## GOD'S WORD USEFUL, WITHOUT NOTE OR COMMENT.

MR. EDITOR,

Lately my attention was specially called to an article, in the *Recorder*, for June written by Correspondent "X," which speaks of the apparent non-utility of Scripture circulation, unless accompanied by external aids. Mr. "X" tells us that "many in this country who have desired to find proof for such an opinion,"—viz. "that the Holy Spirit does take the Word and bring it home to the heart and conscience of men without note or comment or tract"—"with a desire stronger than the miser has for gold, have desired in vain," and that "weighty testimony both by native workers and foreign, has been given to the effect that such facts are not found to exist." Such a state of matters must certainly be greatly discouraging to the "friends of Bible distribution;" and, to us, who think similarly with them regarding Bible Work, it is both a startling and unpleasant intimation.

For the information of all, but especially that they who do believe the Lord does by His Holy Spirit use the Word unaided as a means of effecting a spiritual change in the hearts of the Chinese, may rejoice in the proof of their belief, and be encouraged to go on hopefully and joyfully with the grand and noble work of helping to spread broad-cast throughout this great empire the Word of the