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Religious Communications.

To the Editor of the Christian Spectator.

SIR,

I should be gratified by your insertion of the following account of the missions of the Jesuits to Abyssinia, which constitutes the most of what is known of the church in that country. This account is contained in the Appendix to the proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East, for the year 1817-18, and which appear in the form of an octavo volume. The Ethiopian Church has claims to the attention of the Christian world, and all information respecting it must be interesting. This Church is generally supposed to have been established about the year 330. The first discovery of its existence, appears to have been made by some adventurers, sent out by John II. King of Portugal.

The Courts of Lisbon and of Rome, were, of course, anxious that the Abyssinian Church should be included within the papal jurisdiction; and in the year 1538, Bermudes, a Portuguese, was consecrated Patriarch of Ethiopia by the Pope. Bermudes, from political motives, had been by the Emperor of Ethiopia, nominated successor to the Patriarchate, and had been dispatched to Europe, for the purpose of imploring assistance for the prosecution of a war with the Mohammedans. Succours were sent. The Mohammedans were defeated; but Bermudes could not prevail upon the Emperor to embrace the Catholic Faith. At this period the first mission of the Jesuits to Abyssinia was undertaken.

E. R.

Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesuits, probably aware

that the Church of Abyssinia had by no means submitted to the Pope, as had been for some time erroneously reported in Europe, was very desirous of proceeding thither himself in order to bring about a union; but, not obtaining permission from the Pope, he proposed to send thirteen Missionaries of his new Society; hoping that the rich harvest before them would abundantly repay them for all their toils, and at once give his new order a respectability which none could dispute. In this proposal Loyola succeeded. He accordingly nominated one Nunes Baretto, a Portuguese, as Patriarch; and Andrew Oviedo, and Melchior Corneiro, as Bishops of Hierapolis and Nice, and, in turn, to succeed the Patriarch, should occasion require it. To these were added ten more Jesuits; in order, as he said, that this Mission should, in number and object, represent that of Christ and his Apostles. These persons were all approved by the Pope; and were ordained, and sent to Goa.

Some doubts remaining on the mind of the King of Portugal, as to the real state of Ethiopia, and perhaps as to the propriety of sending another Patriarch while Bermudes continued there, he ordered one of his captains, about to sail to Goa, to send, on his arrival there, into Abyssinia, in order to ascertain this point, and, if possible, to bring away Bermudes. On the arrival of the fleet at Goa, envoys were despatched into Ethiopia, according to the mandate of the King. James Dias Oprestes, Gonsalo Redriguez, and Fulgentio Freyere, all Jesuits, after a short time landed at A-

to the states of Indiana and Illinois. It is expected he will return to that country after a few months.

sent, the last autumn, one missionary into this state, and one into Illinois, for six months each."

Extract of a letter from the Rev. Isaac Reed, a missionary, to the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, dated,

"NEW-ALBANY, (Ind.) April 26, 1819.

"The need of missionary labor is very great in these parts; and large numbers of the people eagerly solicit it. To the westward of me, in all the towns on and near the Ohio river, as far down as there are settlements of white people, there is not a single Presbyterian minister; and very few regular and intelligent ministers of any denomination. And the country back of the river is little better supplied. In this state, which reaches more than one hundred miles to the west of me, and its settlements reach one hundred and fifty miles north-west, there are but two Presbyterian ministers, and one of the Dutch reformed church. On the Kentucky side of the river, in the interior of the state, is an immense, populous, and fast improving country, generally called the Green river country. In it there is one Presbytery, called the Muhlenburgh Presbytery, which has but three ministers; and under their care are twenty-seven churches. These places need help immensely, and they need it soon.

"Your missionary, the Rev. Orin Fowler, is now on his return to Connecticut. I think it proper to inform you what has come to my knowledge respecting the discharge of the trust you committed to him. He has been laborious in your service; and more popular than any previous missionary in these parts. There are two places, which are very desirous to get him to settle with them. They are in different parts of the state; and thousands of people would rejoice to hear that he was again in this missionary field.

"The little church in this place, has been gradually increasing, since I have known it; and religious influence is extending in the town, which contains about eight hundred souls, on the plat, a mile long, and half a mile wide.—There are two sources, from which the pious, in these destitute parts, have hope of relief. Your Society is one; the Board of Missions of the General Assembly, is the other. The latter

Extract of a letter from the Rev. Orin Fowler, who returned lately from a mission to Indiana, &c. to the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, dated June 3, 1819.

"Since I entered into the service of your Society, a period of one year, I have travelled four thousand, two hundred, and twenty-five miles; preached two hundred and thirty-two sermons; visited four hundred families, thirty-two sick persons, and eight schools; formed four churches, administered the Lord's supper six times; baptized eighty-eight children and adults; and received eighty-one persons to the privileges of church-membership, including those formed into churches; besides performing a variety of other missionary duty.

"In the state of Indiana, there are now about 200,000 inhabitants; and in the state of Illinois, about 70,000, exclusive of Indians. There is not a Presbyterian minister, that has a pastoral charge, in either of these states. Two, however, are about to be settled in the former. The anxieties of many, to receive missionary aid, cannot be expressed, but by their tears, and sighs, and groans, and prayers. In several places where I have laboured, there has been some special attention to the one thing needful.

"Now is the time, and the western world the region, in which to do good. The harvest is truly great; the fields are white, and but few to thrust in the sickle. The means of the people are scanty; but, according to their ability, they have uniformly treated me with so much kindness and affection, that what I have seen and experienced has often affected my heart. The surprising difficulties they encounter, with seeming cheerfulness, as well as the distances they travel to hear the word preached, are pleasing testimonials of the price at which they value missionary efforts. I will mention one instance of their kindness and attention to me. In the month of January, while I was travelling near the river Wabash, my horse failed, and soon died. Shortly after, I went to Vincennes, to fulfil an appointment, that, being one of my places of preaching. When it was known