

"The World's Outlook."

THAT foremost missionary periodical, the *Missionary Review of the World*, opens its January number with an article under the above title. Following a brief introduction by the Editor-in-Chief, experts in the various fields give glimpses of the outlook for missions in many countries. We endeavor to condense into a few sentences a number of these interesting statements, from which our readers may get a bird's-eye view of what is going on in the broad field of missions, and what are the prospects for the near future.

ARABIA may be called the last-born of the missionary family. About ten years ago God put it into the heart of Keith Falconer to undertake something for that country. He was a wealthy Scotchman, who cheerfully consecrated his means and personal service to the evangelization of Arabia. Within a year and a half he died, a victim of the climate; but others, inspired by his spirit took up the work, and the Keith Falconer mission still lives and flourishes. The Reformed Church in America has also entered the field, and the North Africa Mission has undertaken work among the Bedouins near Mount Sinai, "Things are waking up in the Keith Falconer Mission," writes one; "take courage, the redemption of Arabia is drawing near." Well might the Churches join in Abraham's prayer: "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!"

The outlook for PERSIA is not bright. Commercially the country is stagnant, politically it is decaying, and ultimately may be partitioned between Russia and England. The law of Islam—death to the convert to Christianity—has been reasserted, which defers the day of religious toleration. Among the Nestorians the work is much more encouraging.

In INDIA the conflict thickens. There have been large gatherings from among the depressed classes, as they are called, the low caste or non-caste people in Northern and North-western India. "Unto the poor is the gospel preached." But the poor who receive the Gospel will not remain poor, it will lift them out of their poverty. The great conflict at present is between the advocates of temperance, purity and national righteousness and their opposites. Men have been imprisoned by English officials for no other crime than preaching and protesting against these public evils. The Government of India is the producer, manufacturer, exporter of vast quantities of opium, and the Government distilleries produce vast quantities of intoxicating liquors. Thus the battle is joined, and there can be no peace while these abominations last. On the other hand, native opinion is changing under the influence of Christian teaching; preaching in English to audiences of educated natives is common; there is much earnestness and activity in Sunday School and temperance work; and on the whole Christianity is surely and steadily advancing.

In SIAM there are two distinct people—the Siamese and the Laos. In respect to mission work there are many favoring circumstances. The people for the most part are simple-hearted, peaceful, receptive and

accessible. The rulers, with few exceptions, have shown themselves friendly, and have often aided by grants of money, land and influence. Among the Laos there has existed for fifteen years a proclamation of absolute religious toleration. The nominal religion is Southern Buddhism, but as this satisfies neither head nor heart, the way is open for a religion that can do both. Years ago a Siamese nobleman said: "Dr. Bradley has gone, but he has undermined Buddhism in Siam."

THIBET.—The attention of many is being turned to this hitherto inaccessible country. Miss Taylor's account of her heroic travels in Thibet excited much interest, and she found no difficulty in enlisting a band of missionaries to accompany her in another attempt. Their way has been blocked, however, by the English authorities at Darjeeling, in the Bengal presidency, who seem to think that the entrance of the mission party might imperil trade relations. At last accounts the party had obtained passes as far as Gnatong, in Sikkim, where they will spend the winter studying the language and waiting for a providential opening. The town referred to is not in Thibet, but some two days' march on the Indian side of the frontier. If the testimony of natives may be trusted, it is not missionaries but traders that the diplomats of China are anxious to exclude from Thibet.

We may expect to hear in the near future that the "great closed land" has at length been entered by the heralds of the cross.

We must reserve reference to other countries to subsequent issues.

The Flowing Tide.

BY REV. W. HARRISON.

IT is a matter for encouragement and hope that amid all the confusion and vast network of eager activities of this busy and progressive age, that the forces working for the world's redemption were never so potent in their influence and so bright with an ever-expanding promise as at the present time. It is becoming more and more evident, as the years pass on, that all merely human experiments for the moral and spiritual regeneration of earth's unhappy millions have, after amplest opportunities, proved complete and hopeless failures. Peoples, in the wide areas of heathenism, left entirely to themselves, have failed to work out their emancipation from the degrading fetters of superstition and error, and instead of advancing in the path of a true progress, have, as a rule, sunk into deeper depths of social misery and of religious darkness and despair.

All the systems of paganism are doomed. Their decay and everlasting ruin are only questions of time. No past veneration, and no memory of far-off superstitious influence and power, can prevent the forces now at work from removing one and all from off the face of the earth. The pressure of present-day civilization now bearing down on the old fabrics of ancient error is increasing from year to year, and all attempts to hinder their universal overthrow are impotent and vain.

Desperate efforts to restore and popularize these dying fictions of a troubled and unholy past are being made here and there, but the consciousness that their authority and power have vanished is creeping with increasing clearness over the opening minds of the world's heathen multitudes of to-day. No man, with anything like an intelligent outlook, would dare to predict a growing and influential future for those colossal but waning superstitions, which for ages have held such myriads in degradation and cruel chains. Independent altogether of the utter incapacity of