

ness. Their views and feelings are more apt, perhaps, to be regarded as curious and interesting mental phenomena than as obstructions to the Christian spirit; and should they at any time be otherwise considered and give pain, those who are so pained may easily take refuge in the thought that it is no part of their particular work to try directly to remove and overcome them. Or if they should try and fail, their work being quite gratuitous and their reputation and worldly standing not being staked on their success, they may feel as if they did not need to care, and thank their stars that they are not missionaries. But with the missionary it is altogether different. If he fails in removing prejudices and passions opposed to Christianity, he fails in everything, and he cannot turn away from the fact—he must face the difficulties, and still work on amid discouragements. And how very disheartening it is to work, and work only, for the good of people who yield you no sign of sympathy or encouragement, to say nothing of active opposition, only those who have experienced it can know.

There is no denying, in the face of these considerations, that an act, a great act, of self-denial is required on the part of the man who deliberately, and with full intelligence of the case, chooses to go as a missionary to India. Yet we believe there is enough of a self-denying spirit in many and many a young man to bear down all such obstacles, if he received encouragement enough from his friends at home and the Church of his fathers. But here the root of the evil lies,—and there is no use in seeking to disguise the fact: relatives and friends oppose him, ministers of the Gospel whom he may know discourage him; and professors of divinity, if he is a student of promise, pool, pool it all, and throw cold water on his feelings. I am not speaking kindly nor in the way of speculation, but as one who has had experience of the matter, and I know whereof I affirm. His parents, perhaps, have exercised a good deal of self-denial and made no small self-sacrifice to get him through “the College,” and they feel as if their proper reward for it all would be that their son should get a *kirk wi’ a guid big steepend*. Or if his parents are wealthy, then more than ever is it ex-

pected that he will attain to some position worthy of himself and honorable to them—by which, of course, is meant a more than usually eligible pastoral charge or parish. And so in either case if he goes abroad, it will be against the feelings and expectations of his parents, and that is something which he cannot slight. Then outside as well as within the family circle there are various repressive forces to be overcome—prejudices, and fears, and appeals to vanity, &c. It is said—and this is a very widely spread and generally entertained opinion—that only those who cannot get Churches at home, or who are afraid they will not, go abroad as missionaries. To go abroad as a missionary is thus regarded as an acknowledgment of failure in the clerical profession, as the last resort of those who cannot do better. And if you point to men of whom that cannot be said, O, well a missionary life was the shortest cut to marriage, or they went away in disgust with the state of the Church at home, or something else than missionary zeal was the impelling motive; and if you go, it will be thought that it was not love of the Gospel, but love of a girl, that took you away.

Or some, who are more cautious and politic in their expressions, and who would not have it said that they are opposed to foreign missionary effort, will quietly say, “India is all very well, but I do not see why they should have the best of our men there.” And so it is indirectly hinted that it would be foolish, very imprudent indeed, for you who are a man of promise to go to any such place—it would be like hiding your talents in a napkin, or casting pearls before swine. A very unchristian act, to be sure! Thus does the devil hide himself often under the guise of common sense! But sometimes he shows himself quite openly, and without such cowardly skulking. If I did not very much misapprehend him, I even heard a learned professor in the faculty of divinity of one of the leading Universities in Scotland express himself in a lecture to the missionary association as if he believed that missionary effort in foreign parts was really of very little use and might as well be discontinued! Large tracts of continent which once had been evange-