

## MISSION FIELD.

The Holy Eastern Church is frequently reproached by "candid friends," both Romanist and Protestant, with apathy and want of energy in carrying out the last commands of the Saviour with regard to the evangelization of the heathen. No one will of course deny that, since the unity of the Catholic Church (at the sight of which her Founder prayed that the world might acknowledge her claims to be of Divine origin) has been impaired by the schism between East and West, the work has not been carried on with such uniform and rapid success as during the first thousand years of her existence. But if we compare the results achieved by the two main portions of Christendom since the middle of the eleventh century, when their final separation took place, down to the present day, it will be seen that the Roman Church has little cause for exultation. It is true, no doubt, that she has long surpassed her sister in point of numbers, owing greatly to the fact that she already in 1054 included within her jurisdiction nations which, beyond the reach of Mahomedan invasions, were destined to lead during many centuries the van of European civilisation. But with all these advantages the fact remains that, so far from having brought fresh races into her fold, she has failed to retain many of those which were once proud to be numbered amongst her children. The loss of England, Scotland, Holland, the three Scandinavian monarchies, and the greater part of Germany, as well as much of her former influence even in those countries which nominally remain to her, should make her pause before boasting on this point, especially as these losses are not balanced by any compensating circumstance except such as may be readily accounted for by increase of population, and other natural or historical circumstances.

On the other hand, if we compare the Eastern Church of the eleventh century, almost entirely represented by the fast decaying Byzantine Empire, so soon to pass under the cruel and degrading yoke of the infidel, to its present extended sway over one-fifth of the surface of the globe; if we trace the history of the gradual spread of Greek Christianity from the then insignificant Metropolitan see of Kieff, and watch how one by one the rude tribes which were destined to be incorporated into the mighty Russian Empire were brought into the Christian fold, we shall be inclined to modify any opinion which we may hastily have formed to the disadvantage of the Eastern Church in this matter. Moreover the record of these conversions often so closely resembles those of similar triumphs in the West, that in studying them, if we take for granted the substitution of Eastern for Western names—Constantinople for Rome, the order of St. Basil for that of St. Benedict, Byzantine, and later on Russian, for Roman influence—we could almost imagine that we were

reading the pages of the memorable monk of Yarrow over again. We think therefore that a short sketch of one of the youngest of these Eastern Missions to the heathen, whose letter of congratulation sent to her mother Church last year (written originally in Japanese, but translated for us from the Russian) is set forth below, will not be without interest to our readers.

The Russian mission to Japan was founded in 1860 by Father Nicholas, its present Bishop, to whose indefatigable labours and organizing skill it owes much of its success. In 1886 (the latest year of which official statistics have yet been published) his staff consisted of an archimandrite, a prior, two regular and eight secular priests (these latter since increased to twelve), three deacons of Japanese birth, and 104 licensed preachers, who carry on the work in 205 parish churches dispersed throughout the various provinces of the empire, the clergy having of course to serve these in turn. Of mission buildings other than churches (schools, parsonages, &c.) the number given is 148, and we may mention that in the seminary there were 107 pupils, and ten in the more advanced school preparing for holy orders, besides several at the Kieff and other Russian academies. The total number of converts in 1886 was 12,546, of which 1,470 received the grace of Baptism in that year alone, the parish churches being also increased by 21, and the licensed preachers by ten; moreover the Bishop in his report says that such was the demand for teachers in all parts of the country that he had been obliged to send pupils who had not finished their course in the seminary to carry on the work, and that even these were insufficient to meet the full requirements of the mission.

The mission is also meeting the spiritual needs of its children by the issue of books in the Japanese language. In the year 1886 the series of them was continued by the publication of the second half of the Gospel, and the first Epistle of St. John, and St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, in each case accompanied by commentaries on the same, as well as selections from the lives of the saints, and laws of the Church, and a second edition of the Russian catechism. Much progress has also been made towards the completion of the Cathedral Church at Tokio, thanks to the munificence of many pious Russians who are anxious to share in the good work.

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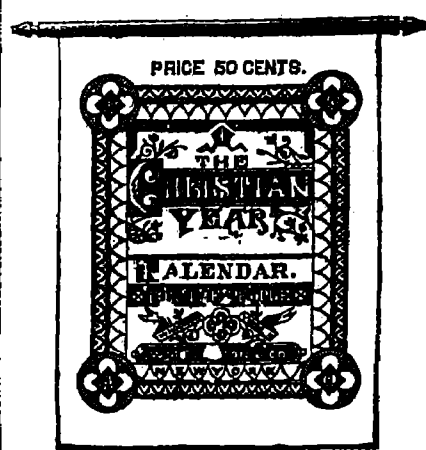
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