

MISSION FIELD.

Mr. Mackenzie, the chief commissioner of the central provinces of India, in officiating recently at the laying of the corner stone of a Mission church at Jabulpore, made an address on the missionary enterprise, from which the following is taken:

"No man who studies India with a seeing eye, can fail to perceive that the indirect results of missionary enterprise, if it suits you so to call them, are, to say the least, more pregnant with promise. The Dagon heathenism is being undermined on all sides. To careless bystanders the image may seem as yet intact in all its fall. I have often given it as my opinion, that ere many years are over, we shall have in India a great religious upheaval. The heaven of western thought, and the heaven of Christianity together are working on the inert heap of dead and fetid superstitions, and by processes which cannot always be closely traced, are spreading a regenerating ferment through the mass, which must in time burst open the cerements that now enshroud the Indian mind."

THE BIBLE IN SOUTH INDIA.

By the Rev. G. U. Pope, D. D.,
teacher of Tamil and Telugu in
the University of Oxford, and
Chaplain of Balliol College.

"And I saw another Angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal Gospel to proclaim unto them that dwell on the earth, and unto every nation, and tribe, and tongue, and people."—Rev. xiv. 6.

It is a wonderful fact that 296 versions of the Holy Scriptures into the various vernaculars of the world exist and are in active circulation; and it seems quite evident that it is the steadfast determination of Christians to carry forward this work till the Bible is put into the hands of the men of every tribe in their own dialect.

And this pledges the Christian Church to send forth her ministers to explain and expound the textbook thus prepared.

Of the versions of Holy Scripture, the Tamil is unique in its history, as it is marvellous in its excellence.

The first attempt at translation was by a Mr. Fonseca, in Jaffna, in about A. D. 1650. He rendered the Gospel of St. Matthew into Tamil from the Portuguese. Subsequently the great Dutch Missionary, Baldaus, Dr. Kat, Dr. Ruel, and others carried on and revised the work. I think the entire Bible was not then translated, but what was done was useful at the time, and has helped subsequent translators. It was remarkable for the beauty of the type set for it. It may be noted, by the way, that there was much zeal of a certain kind among the Dutch in Ceylon for the propagation of Christianity; though this zeal was greatly under the influence of political considerations and often not guided by any special wisdom, or by much knowledge of

oriental human nature. There is something startling in the division, seen in the history of all Dutch territory, at once into parishes, in each of which a church was erected, a Christian pastor appointed, and schools opened. The principle acted upon was, *what is Dutch must be Christian*. Hugo Grotius wrote his celebrated work *De veritate* to aid missionaries.

On October 17, 1708, the renowned Danish pioneer of missions in Tranquebar, began his translation, and in 1719 had advanced as far as the Book of Ruth. Portions were published as completed, and one edition of the New Testament was printed at Halle. In 1725 Schultze, a German, completed the translation, including the Apocrypha. These translations were made from the originals, with diligent comparison of the chief versions—the influence, as was natural, of Luther's grand German Bible being very marked. This was our first complete Tamil version: faithful, strong, and coarse—as uncouth, sometimes, as the marvellous type in which it was printed.

In 1754 we find Johan Philip Fabricius, a man of learning, taste, and of very considerable poetic genius, engaged in an improved version. The whole Tamil Bible seems to have been so thoroughly revised by him that it was ever afterwards called Fabricius' Version. This translation is in very colloquial language, but in its simplicity is often sublime. The Psalms and Gospels are almost perfect. He was at work at it in 1773. The next hand laid upon it was that of the venerable and learned Rottler, a Dane, Missionary of the S. P. C. K. and S. P. G. from 1776. In 1819, Dr. Rottler was still at work on it, assisted by a young Prussian, C. T. E. Rhenius, afterwards a celebrated Missionary in Tinnevely. By this time the second version had lost much of its identity and character.

(To be continued.)

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