

might have been! How many an Indian Zenana they might have made happy and holy! How many a Japanese lady they might have taught to read the Word of Life! How many a miserable Chinese mother might they have led into peace and joy in believing! What glorious results they might have secured for eternity! How every remembrance of each one might cause you to thank your God for the privilege of having been permitted to bear and rear such instruments for His glory! But you could not spare them, you could not expose them to hardships and suffering. It would never do to send your delicately reared girls among the degraded and ignorant heathen! and so they were doomed to the very uninteresting life of a Christian young woman, with little or nothing to do!

You would have been glad they should have served the Lord at home, you say? Yes; but they did not find occasional "amateur" work of this kind enough to engage heart and mind. Others were doing it abundantly. No important responsibility was laid on them to call out their energies, develop their abilities, and exercise their spiritual graces. They had not the stimulus of the *urgent needs* of others; they began, perhaps, to serve the Lord with one hand daintily; but when difficulties arose, or novelty wore off, they gave it up, and no one was much the worse. *That sort of work does not avail to save the young and energetic from worldliness, selfishness, or disgust with life. It is not a vocation, it is not a life.* It is all very well for those who have distinct and important secular duties devolving on them to serve the Lord by the way, as it were, and fill up their odd moments of leisure by doing what they can. But your girls did not marry; they had not the natural and absorbing avocations of wife and mother; they were spared the sufferings, and cares, and self-denial, and responsibility involved in bringing up children; they had no claims of business: their time was their own; *they wanted a life work, hard, high, holy life-work.* Oh, had you laid before them the claims of the heathen, advised and assisted them to become missionaries, how differently your daughters *might* have turned out!

The young mind *must* have interests; the young heart *must* have objects on which to spend its ardour and its affections. Human nature must have difficulties with which to cope, hardships to endure, battles to fight, obstacles to overcome. What are cricket, and croquet, and chess, and all games of skill, but an artificial creation of these? Life, if natural and well-spent, is full of these—life without them is vapid and vain.

The lives of Christian young ladies are too often deprived of all interest by a false and foolish parental affection. I once knew a mother of two of the finest little girls I ever saw, who was insanely anxious about their health. The wind was never suffered to blow on their rosy cheeks; they were kept in bed for days if they chanced to sneeze; and the mother's life was one long misery for fear they should be ill. She succeeded at last in *making* them ill, and soon after she died of over-anxiety. Then the girls, left to themselves, got well. Now few mothers are so foolish as to the *bodies* of their children; but the *characters* of too many are developed under similarly unnatural shelter and protection. It is not natural for a woman grown to be an object of tender parental care. The fully-fledged nestling leaves the nest, and cares for itself, and soon for its young. If a young woman does not marry, and no special demand for her presence exists at home, she should be allowed, yea, *encouraged* to devote her life to some worthy object, not thwarted, and opposed, and restricted by petty conven-

tionalties, perplexed by finding her Bible teach self-sacrifice, and her parents self-preservation; her Bible teach her to despise the world and earthly interest, and her parents teach her to put them in the first place!

Alas! friends, my heart aches when I think of the buried talents that exist in the shape of loving, well-educated, gifted daughters, pining in Christian families *for lack of an object worth living for*; and then think of the miserable millions of their own sex pining elsewhere, and perishing for lack of the knowledge these could impart! Again I ask, whose is the fault? Dear fathers and mothers, does it not lie at *your doors*? Say not, "We cannot *make* our children missionaries; God must call them." I well know that. But do ye your part, and be very sure God will do His! Lay your children on His altar from their very birth; and just as you trust Him to bless your efforts for their conversion, so trust Him to accept your dedication of them to His service, and to bless your endeavours to fit them for it. You know you can make them almost what you will. You know *they are this day very much what you have made them!* You know they come into your hands plastic as potter's clay, blank as white paper, till *you* trace the lines that cannot be effaced. Train them for missionaries from their conversion onwards, and it will be a wonder indeed if a large Christian family grow up without at least one missionary in it.

And train those who are not fit for missionaries to *support those that are*. Put before them a holy object for money-making. Let the brother that stays at home labour for the brother that goes forth as a missionary; or you, father, ere you die, render your missionary son or daughter independent if you can. We want, the world wants, Christ wants, *not a few hundred paid agents, but a whole host of voluntary missionaries*—an army of volunteers, to invade the realms of heathendom. And say not, dear mother, "I cannot part with my daughter." Would you not give her up willingly if a suitable offer of marriage presented itself, even though it involved going to India or China? Will you give her to man, and not give her to Christ? Say not, "We cannot expose her to a bad climate, and all the risks and hardships of mission-life." What! will you deprive your child of suffering with Christ, that she may reign with him? Will you rob her of the opportunity of learning practically to rely on God's all-sufficiency? Will you prevent her hearing the "Well-done, good and faithful servant," by-and-by? This were to act anything but a parent's part.

Far be it from me to say one word to grieve Christian parents who have done their best to train their children for God. Many such have nobly succeeded; and some who have failed have perhaps been more to be pitied than blamed. And far be it from me to disparage the urgent claims of home mission work. They lie before our very eyes, however, and can in a sense plead their own cause; and we have a hundred home missionaries, not to say a thousand, for every single labourer in heathen lands. And far be it from me to think lightly of the sacred demands of filial duty. But where parents have many children, can they not spare *one* for Christ's work? For mere worldly motives how many a worldly parent spares all! I only plead with Christian parents that they may consider their ways in this thing. If in this year 1887, say, one thousand Christian parents of converted boys and girls now in the schoolroom resolved before God to devote one son or one daughter (if not more) to missionary work, to train them with a view to it, to endow them with money enough to provide them with food and raiment, and to send them forth as soon as they reach a