

MEDICAL missions, properly understood, is the union of the healing art with the proclamation of salvation, the former but the means to an end, subservient in every particular to the actuating principle—that of winning souls for Christ. God has wondrously blessed and owned the work of the medical missionary. How much to be regretted that the Church of Christ, anxious to promote the world's redemption, did not sooner avail itself of this most important agency. We, who profess to follow in the footsteps of our Saviour have been slow to imitate Him in this particular. He was in very truth the pioneer, medical missionary to our earth. Over and over again we read in the Gospels of His miracles of healing. The blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, and the dead are raised to life. Blessed ministry of healing, what a trail of light follows in its wake! What a wonderful tour that, when "Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." And yet it was only in 1841 that the first medical missionary society was formed. This work has met with discouragements as well as encouragements. Prejudices had to be overcome, barriers removed, obstacles overthrown, and perhaps the most serious were found just where one had least cause to expect them. One missionary society, in answer to an application from a young medical student, who felt called of God to assume the responsibilities involved in becoming a medical missionary, sent the following reply: "It is not our province to send out and support medical men on our mission fields. Our agents are sent forth to preach the Gospel to the heathen." But the light is breaking, and the Christian world to-day, though slow to act, is recognizing the inestimable aid to the cause of missions derived from the labors of the medical missionary. He has opportunities which fall to the lot of no other; while ministering to the diseased body he can point the sin-sick soul to the great Physician. He has one great advantage over the evangelist; the people among whom he labors, compelled through suffering, throng around him—they follow him, claim him and *listen* to him. Isabella Bird Bishop says, "I have come to think that the multiplication of male and female medical missionaries is the most important work in connection with missions which lies before the Church to-day, as well as the most blessed form of missionary effort to which young men and woman who are consecrated to foreign service can aspire."

The need for more laborers in this special department of Christ's vineyard is great. Physical anguish is appealing in loudest tones for relief. The doors of heathendom swing wide to admit the medical missionary. Oh, that such a spirit of consecration may fall upon our young men and women graduates from medical universities as will influence numbers of them to offer themselves to this work, the motive power impelling being love to Christ and love for His suffering ones.

Fireside Chat with Discouraged Workers.

"**F**EAR thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

One year ago to-night we gathered for the first time around our fireside. How swiftly the months have fled! and what has been or will be the outcome of our "Chats?" Have they served simply to while away an hour, or have they strengthened us for life's duties, intensified our faith in God, and made us stronger spiritually than we were a year ago? If they have not done this their mission has signally failed.

We speak though without hesitation of one good thing accomplished through them—we are nearer to each other to-night than we were a year ago,—we *know*, and therefore understand each other better.

We are glad that so many of you, who at first joined us because you belonged to the great army of discouraged workers, have not left us when you graduated from their ranks; and though your places have been filled by those who a year ago were not in harness, and to whom office-bearing in our Woman's Missionary Society seems but a series of discouragements; we will always have for you a thrice-hearty welcome. Tarry with us and help us in the future as you have in the past. How much we need you can only be gauged by our dismay at the possibility of our losing you.

Was there ever a brighter Fireside than ours to-night? How the flames vie with the holly berries in brightness and rich coloring! How beautiful our simple decorations appear, and how near they seem to bring us to the Christ King, because it is in honor of the glad Christmas season that we have intertwined the glossy leaves of the holly and mistletoe! But, ah! in the midst of joyous Christmas congratulations comes the thought that in some of the homes of our Woman's Missionary Society members there is—

"A spray of cypress twining
With the holly wreath to-night."

To all such troubled hearts, feeling in keenest measure at this anniversary of anniversaries their sore bereavement, we tender our deepest sympathy. Words fail us, but we want to tell you we have travelled over the same, lonely pathway that as yet is but new to your feet, and understand something of what this season means to you. Every joyous bell-peal, every glad Christmas carol serves but to accentuate your loneliness. How *could* you stand it all were it not for the thought that He who makes no mistakes, and seeing the end from the beginning, appointed or permitted this heavy trial, which to you has so changed the glad Christmas-tide into a season of mourning? But in the midst of your desolation can you not hear His tender words of promise? "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; *not as the*