

THE MISSION OF FAILURES.

DID it ever occur to you, Mrs. Mendon," queried the pastor's wife of her faithful helper in all the woman's work of the Fulham church, "to wonder why, when we begin to sew for our missionary box, our home-missionary meetings are well attended, while, as soon as the box is packed and started on its way, the numbers fall off, one by one? Also, why we can never gather at our foreign auxiliary the number we have here to-night?"

"Yes, I have often puzzled over it," answered Mrs. Mendon, "especially as our contributions are good, and those of the foreign society, which has the smaller attendance, exceed those of the other, proving that our people are not indifferent to the 'all-the-world' call."

"Well, as far as the amount of money is concerned, it is but right that the foreign board should receive the most, for its outlay covers all the various branches of work on the foreign field, while home missions is only one of many avenues of Christian benevolence in our own land," explained Mrs. Egerton. "The people are interested if the offerings in money are to be the standard of interest, but the first aim of this woman's work should not be to raise money. It ought to be to give the women such a thorough missionary education that they would be interested in spite of the many other things that claim their attention. And those who will put themselves in the way of acquiring this knowledge as a matter of fact are interested. But how to bring the rest within the charmed circle, that is the question."

"Get General Assembly to pass a Law of Compulsory Education in this department of church work," laughingly suggested Mrs. Mendon.

After a meditative silence Mrs. Egerton exclaimed, "I've a happy thought! Now that we have most of the women of the church here to-night, why not seize the opportunity to see if they know themselves where the fault lies?"

"A brilliant idea!" said the delighted secretary. "Out of their own mouths they shall be condemned. I'll call them to order and you prepare to take the floor."

The interested gaze of all was turned to this well-beloved "mother in Israel" as she rose and asked their attention.

"Mrs. Mendon and I have been puzzling over there in the corner about a question which concerns you all, and it just occurred to us that there was no reason why each should not

speak for herself. As a church we somewhat pride ourselves upon our contributions to the home and foreign boards, and I doubt if there is any other congregation with so few wealthy members that gives more in proportion to its means. We are a splendid object lesson in the power of the pennies, and make a brave showing in the Presbyterian treasurer's report. These freewill offerings prove that you acknowledge the claims of the work, but this is only one side of the shield—the golden side. 'These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.'"

"In what other relation of life do we show ourselves so indifferent to the value received for any outlay of time, money, or strength, as in this of mission work? How many seek to know about the merits of this call as compared with the many others, or ever ask what their gifts are helping to accomplish? During the time we gather to sew for the box, which is one of the busiest seasons of the year, all the women of our church, some at a great deal of sacrifice, respond to the call and give that added proof of their intelligent interest which is lacking the rest of the year. Now, we want to get the reasons why an all-the-year round interest is not practicable. Let us pass over the objection of want of time, for you make time to attend these meetings, and probably would for the others if you felt the call as forcibly. Mrs. Mav, you generally can give a reason for what you do; cannot you help us to solve this problem?"

"I'm not so sure I always have a good reason for what I leave undone," frankly responded Mrs. Mav. "I come here to do a thing which I know how to do, and I am glad to help where I know I can be of use. In the regular monthly meetings I'm not needed, or, if you protest that I am, it is for work that I cannot do well. If there were anything to do there as there is here I would go, but when I have paid my subscription I seem to have performed my chief duty to foreign missions."

"When we come here we have an informal social gathering, and that is much more attractive than a stiff, prosy missionary meeting," said one who never gave herself the chance to discover what were the characteristics of the monthly meeting.

"Indeed, they are not stiff and prosy," indignantly protested a voice from a far corner. "Mrs. Mendon has induced me to attend lately, and I find them so interesting that I told her I would go of my own free will now. I wouldn't miss them."