

MISSION FIELD

PROMOTION OF RELIGION AT HOME BY FOREIGN MISSIONS.

[A Paper read at the Bishop of Ely's Visitation by the Rev Francis Pott, Rector of Northill.]

CONTINUED.

There is yet one more suggestion that I should like to make in the same direction. There is among English people, what foreigners are apt to notice with some contempt an insularity, a narrowness of sympathy, and a standing aloof from men of other races. Now this is not confined to social and political matters, where I should not notice it, and where it may be accounted for, perhaps, by our natural position as islanders; it extends to religious matters; it may be due in a measure to that grievous severance, against our will, which after the Reformation shut us out from co-operation with the rest of Christendom, to say nothing of our grievous internal divisions; but whatever its cause, and whatever its extent, this isolation in fact and in feeling has been a sad injury to our own religious life; it has often blighted and shrivelled its fruits at home as well as abroad. The very hope of a restoration of that lost unity and (as a means thereto) the opening of our mutual sympathies, must undoubtedly beget a spirit of more quickened personal religion within ourselves, and experience shows that there is no solvent of antipathies so powerful as finding ourselves working side by side as our Missionaries find themselves doing, with workers of other races and other churches; and this experience, reflected back upon us at home who are supporting them, must do us good.

But this new sense of freedom from old narrow traditions which comes to us from the Mission field will move us to break through, not only the suspicions and coldness begotten of differences in race and opinion, but the more selfish individualism which has done so much to hinder English Christians from realizing the corporate nature of Christ's religion, the One Body, and the glorious functions of that Body in working God's work in the world, the vastness of that work, and the unexampled opportunities that our Church and nation have received for discharging its great part in it. The thought of all this, as we look out over the great field of Christian Missions, will surely move us to respond to the call of the Bishop of Western New York in his Christian Ballads, and to reap, in the spirit, the larger life which he promises:

"Let out thy soul—and pray!
Not for thy home alone;
Away in prayer, away!
Make all the world thine own!
There! dost thou not perceive
Thy spirit swell within,
And something high receive,
That is not born of sin?
Yea! e'en I did not know
How largely I could live;
But Faith hath made me grow
To more than earth can give."

This openness of heart, this larger sympathy, this spirit of loyalty to something better and wider than the British Empire, is not the least though I have put it last, of the elements in the promotion of a true, active, and cheerful religion amongst ourselves, and it is nowhere better caught than in the active support of Foreign Missions.

:o:

NOTES OF THE MONTH

From the Mission Field, S. P. G.

In continuation of the report of the baptism of 303 converts from demonolatry in the Nazareth Mission, Tinnevely, we are glad to state that, on November 13th, 98 more people at Kolikangudy were baptized by the Missionaries. All these new people have been under Christian instruction for two years but as they belong to the agricultural class, it is difficult to assemble them all together at a time like the present when, in Tinnevely, the wet weather begins, and farming operations are in full progress. This accounts for all these people not being baptized at one and the same time. There are still some fifty persons to be baptized.

At the request of the Organising Secretary, a Welsh clergyman, who remits from £17 to £20 annually to the Society from his Sunday school, has sent the following account of his plan:

"Our Sunday schools begin punctually at 2.30 p.m. The superintendent, the Vicar, opens the school with a hymn and a few collects. Each class has a class book of its own of 12 pages—that is, a page for each month—wherein is registered the name of the different scholars belonging to the class. Also on each page there are columns for entering the number of hymns, verses and collects repeated for every Sunday, as well as a column for entering the amount contributed to Missions. The teacher takes the penny when the scholar brings it. The class books every Sunday are given out at a certain time by one of the promising boys of the school, and are collected in like manner before the singing at the end. On the 2nd Sunday in the month the Secretary and his assistant go around, collect the money, and enter it into a book kept for the purpose. At the same time, the superintendent also goes around with leaflets supplied by the S.P.G., and gives one to each child that had given something in the collection. Also he distributes useful tracts on the same principle. At the end of the school, in order to provoke each other to good works, the superintendent announces publicly what each class had given and the amount of the sum total. This has a wonderful effect upon the contributions. In addition, if anything wonderful has taken place in the Missionary world during the month the superintendent calls the attention of the school to it, and thereby creates interest in Missionary work amongst his flock; in fact, it is a miniature Missionary meeting. On the Monday following, the collection is taken to the savings bank, where it remains till the end of the year, and on New Year's Day it is forwarded to headquarters without

any deduction or expense to the Society. For thirty years I have carried on Missionary work on this principle, and the longer I live the more convinced I am that it is a sound and right principle.

On New Year's Day invariably we have our annual meeting in connection with the Sunday school, when we review our work for the past year, and when we reward deserving scholars for good conduct, regular attendance, repetition of collects, &c. On this occasion we also publish what every class gave in the aggregate to the Missionary cause. And when the receipt arrives for the yearly contributions it is pinned in a conspicuous place, that every member may see that the money had been entrusted to those who manage our Society in London.

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