

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

A MISSIONARY TOUR ROUND THE WORLD.

The Rev. W. Fleming Stevenson, Convener of the Foreign Mission of the Irish Presbyterian Church, has given the thoughts and feelings awakened by his recent mission tour round the world to the Assembly of the Irish Church; and the address has been republished, in pamphlet form, for general circulation. We have before us the pamphlet, published in New York, at the Mission House, 23 Centre street, and any minister who wishes to give his people a bird's eye view of the present state of the world with regard to the missionary enterprises, and of the efforts which the Presbyterian Church generally is putting forth in the great field of the world, cannot do better than get a few copies to read to his congregation and circulate among them.

The first impression which Mr. Stevenson received from his observations was that of the vastness of the enterprise of missions in the East. The enormous areas of territory,—the crowded masses of population, whose statistics it is hardly possible for the imagination to grasp—impressed him profoundly. Peking, he tells us, seems to be near the northern frontier of China, yet the laden carts despatched thither from Peking consumed more than three months on the journey. Central India alone, in which our Canadian Church has planted its mission, "is as large as Great Britain and France and Spain. There is a missionary," he says, "who is said to have preached during ten years in two thousand towns where he could discover no trace of the Gospel having been preached before, and all these towns, some of them with a population as large as that of one of our cities, were in one district of India. There are four Indian rivers that, if they ran in a continuous line, would cover twice the distance between Liverpool and New York, while the total area of their basins is nearly 1,300,000 square miles; and in China, the mighty Yang-tz, which at many points is twenty miles broad after the rainy season, is navigated by merchant junks, and partly by steamers for eighteen hundred miles inland from its mouth. It would be easy to multiply such illustrations. They were continually recurring to us, and by degrees (but only by degrees) we began to understand the vast area which the mission lines must cover."

The ancient and complex civilizations and high culture which Mr. Stevenson met with everywhere in these Eastern regions was another cause of surprise, and even of awe. "Few impressions," he says, "of a marvellously distant past can be so striking as that produced by the pyramids of Egypt, for they seem from their stony and immovable heights to look down upon all the centuries of history; and yet as that impression seized on us, as it must have seized on every traveller, we were reminded that it was the steel of India that chiselled the stones of the pyramids. . . . The civilization, the literature and art and science of India and China have been continued in the longest unbroken line of which we have any record, and the mind of India and China is probably as vigorous and within its limits as keenly active as that of any European people." And with this ancient civilization are entwined some of the most deeply rooted and venerable religious systems of the world. "By the time of the Judges, the primitive worship of the Hindoo Aryans was already so old that it had decayed into Vedantism. Even caste dates back to five hundred years before Christ. . . . For millenniums these religions have been moulding and guiding the thoughts and professing to satisfy the aspirations not of savages but of intelligent nations. Their ritual has been associated with all the joys and sorrows of life, with its hopes and sins, and also with the smallest acts of every day. They have penetrated with deep and fibrous roots into the character of the race. They have been the chief element of unity and cohesion in the national life. They have been guarded with the most jealous reverence. And they have stood—at least in India—the severest shocks of persecution and the strain of great schisms that have sprung up within their own borders."

Such thoughts could not but deepen the sense of the difficulty of the work which the Church has set before her in her attempts to grapple with such systems. But, says Mr. Stevenson:

"Just as deep was the impression left of the vast and ben-

eficient forces that are at the disposal of the Church of Christ. Everywhere we met the missionary and heard of others far beyond. They were often isolated. They were holding Christian outposts at an enormous disadvantage and against enormous odds. But it seemed as if, wherever we might go, we would find these thin and broken but undaunted lines of Christian chivalry. I could relate many incidents that would bear out this conviction of the energy, and adventure, and ubiquitousness of the Church and the glorious possibilities that are before her, but I am anxious to answer at once a question that demands an answer:—What impression have we of the change which these forces have already effected?"

Hearing in mind the very recent origin of steady missionary operations in these lands—dating back only to the beginning of this century—and the many difficulties and drawbacks besetting their initial stage, and also the fact that, even now, notwithstanding their expansion, the missions have not at their disposal the hundredth part of the working help always at the service of the Church at home, Mr. Stevenson unhesitatingly declares that the work already accomplished surpasses his expectations. He says:

"There are already (exclusive of any fruit of the Romish Missions), about four hundred thousand persons connected with the Christian Church in India, China, and Japan, connected with it by more or less regular habits of public worship. There are, besides, about two hundred thousand children receiving a Christian education. . . . In a well-known and very bigoted town of Western India, with about thirty thousand of a population, I was assured that through street-preaching alone the great majority of the people are familiar with the leading facts in the life of Christ. Even while we were on our journey we found accessions of large bodies of persons to Christianity that had their origin in a chance sermon read or in the reading of a Christian book. Besides the professed Christians, who number four hundred thousand, it might be safe to estimate that there are at least a million more, or a million and a half in all, who more or less, directly come under the influence of the mission. Ten years now may mean the gathering into the fold of ten or twenty times as many as the same period would have yielded a quarter of a century ago. The total increase of this, last year, alone in India, is probably equal to the total increase returned by the Allahabad Conference for the ten years ending 1871."

For the details in which Mr. Stevenson powerfully brings home to our imagination the great and blessed work now being done by our noble Christian force in the East, our readers must be referred to the pages of the Address itself. But while he holds the progress of missionary enterprises to be in itself a noble work, he points out that, placed beside the numbers of the huge populations which surround it, the results seem small indeed. "There is only a slight fringe of stations along the shores and up a few of the rivers of China and Japan, and a closer fringe along the endless miles of Indian coast, and along a few of its interior roads. There are areas in India larger than France without a native Christian; and if we take all the Christians away it would not make one-sixth the difference caused by the losses of the single famine of last year." But then missions are not, he tells us, to be judged by their direct results alone, since every missionary sets in motion currents of influence which he cannot trace. In China, in Japan, and most of all in India, the indirect influence of missions has done much to revolutionize the whole tone of thought and social life. Prejudices and bigotry are modified, the old superstitions are loosened in their hold, and Christianity is at least respected by numbers of men of intelligence and culture, who have no thought of becoming Christians themselves.

But to increase the direct results of missions and to accelerate the progress of the work of evangelization, the Church must redouble her efforts and increase her force, Mr. Stevenson says:

"If this noble mission to the heathen is to be worthily carried on, it will only be when the roots of our sympathy sink down into principle, into faith and love. Let there be no gift withdrawn, no look or prayer withheld from the great mission at our doors and the other missions God has given us beyond. But what I must say to-night is this, that I have carried away a sad impression, an impression of a multiplied and weary sadness that the mission is undermanned. It is a melancholy story, a story of painful and disheartening details. Brave and loving men seize their opportunities, and a good work is done; then one of them falls a victim to overwork, the place is left vacant, but those that are left appeal for help and try to stretch their thin ranks until they meet again. The work spreads, for God blesses it, and there is more need to draw upon the sympathy and Christ-like love of those at home. They appeal for help again, and, meanwhile, out of their own substance, (never abundant) they supply what is wanted. After long and anxious waiting the news comes that no help can be sent at present, that the funds will not allow it, that men are wanted elsewhere. And then the missionaries that are left, denying themselves to the utmost, toiling in illness as others might toil in health, seeing the opportunities reach out on every side and obliged to pass them by with a drooping spirit, and scarcely able to resist the benumbing sense of desertion that creeps over them, still look wistfully toward the

old Church at home. My brethren, if you saw that once, (and I have seen it many times till I was weary at heart) you would do your best not to let it be again. I have known of three new stations that were formed during the furlough of a missionary, and when he came back to be met by this great joy, his first exclamation was, 'Where shall I find the money to support them?' It was a bitter cry; it must have taken many a disappreciated to have wrung it from a man's heart, but it is a cry that enters the ear of the Lord of the harvest while we sit at home at ease. Now, our own missions are undermanned; and I suppose we would at present be afraid to send men, if even they were ready, because we may say, 'Where shall I find the money to support them?' A post or two in a province and a man or two at a post; that is not the way for the Church of Christ to wage this gigantic but holy war."

Much must be left unquoted that it would be a pleasure to quote from this magnificent address; but we cannot refrain from giving the concluding paragraphs almost entire which will be the more interesting to our readers for the passing and most encouraging reference to our own Canadian missions.

"A Legend runs, that, at the close of this century, the Ganges is to lose its sacred character, which will be transferred to a river farther west, and, as the time comes nearer, faith in the legend gathers strength. I see that western river to which, in some dim day, the legend may be pointing, the river of the City of God, the streams of which have already made glad the hearts of Christians through these nineteen centuries, the river of God's grace that flows from the cross of Christ, and to which the millions of India will yet set out on pilgrimage that they may find the same joy? Is it not westward that India must look? And what response shall we make? It was delightful to find our fellow Presbyterians at almost every point we visited along the lines of the noble army of missionaries; in Tokio and Yokohama; reaching in China to the Anso in the north, and southward to Formosa and the region about Canton; to open their first mission church in Peking; to witness the baptism of the seven-hundredth convert of their mission at Swatow; and to be welcomed by them in Hong Kong, and Singapore, and Ceylon; to notice that the structures of their churches are prominent landmarks in the chief cities of India; to stay with them at Arest (and in that district where there are thousands of native Christians, the missionaries are all members of one honoured family); to travel with them through Gujerat and Kattiswar, to rejoice with them in Rajpootana; to meet the young converts in whom the Canadian mission has found its first and brilliant success at Indore; to find them firmly settled in the centre of India at Allahabad and to see their stations as far up as Lahore; to hear of them farther still at Sealkote and Chumba, and when taken to the highest point of the spurs of the Himalaya at Landour, to be told that it was the sanitarium of a Presbyterian mission. It was delightful; but does it not mean that we, here, cannot lag behind?"

"Appeal after appeal was put in my hands as we passed from mission to mission. I feel their burden as I speak from that land of promise which we hold in Maitchooria, from all China, and from all India, I hear the voices of those who entreated me to plead with you that you would send them messengers of Christ. There are those who were of us who have died in Christ since our last meeting, and some of whom have been linked with this mission since almost it began; and across the grave, and from the empty space that they have left beside us, I can fancy that there comes the same appeal. There is no motive we can have so noble as that love to men that draws us into sympathy with the infinite love of our blessed Lord; and yet, if you but knew the slender links that bind the people of India to our rule, the possibilities of discontent, and in a large class the certainty of disaffection, if you could see the broad and I fear not narrowing, gulf that divides the European from the native, if you could feel at how many points the influence and the example of the missionary are a healing and softening force, and that without a force like this, culture may only intensify dislike, and the righteousness of a powerful government may not avert revolt, you would recognize in Christian missions the power that will keep India great. Let us not delay; but let us rise above the old measure of our faith, and like those who have been smitten by a new love, send out the flower of our men, and gifts that have the stamp of sacrifice upon them, into the great struggle."

"It is not more than two months since I watched the sun rise over the Himalayas, and, as the light gathered the boundless plains of India grew visible, stretching for a hundred miles to the south, dim and still among the shadows; but when the sun rose and smote the plains, the shadows fled away, and all the sounds of life stole up into the air; and I longed as you would have longed, for that day when Christ will rise in all His glory over the whole land, when the shadows of its night and the sleep of death will give place to the shining of the Sun of Righteousness and all the waking of a spiritual life; and then I turned to see the mountain wall, height upon height of mighty mountain ranges, and behind the endless peaks of snow, shining like some bright pathway out of this world into another, and I felt in the clear glory of that sun, as if the great ingathering of the heathen peoples was already come, and that I saw

'Ten thousand times ten thousand,
In sparkling raiment bright;
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steep of light.
'Tis finished—all is finished!
Their fights with death and sin:
Fling open wide the golden gates
And let the victors in.'

OUR COLLEGE FUNDS.

MR. EDITOR,—I beg to inform your correspondent, "A.G.O.K.," that I have as good authority for speak-