

ARCHDEACON FARRAR ON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Concluded.

(2) "MISSIONS A FAILURE."

LET me cut away all grounds for another objection which is often plausibly urged for despising Missions, and was made not many years ago by a noble duke in the House of Lords, that Missions are a "gigantic impracticability," or an "organized hypocrisy;" and that every man engaged in them must be a fanatic, or an impostor. Thus do men who have never taken the smallest trouble to inquire into the subject reiterate the ignorant assertion that "Missions are a failure." A failure? And how is it then that, whereas in the third century after Christ not one man out of 150 of the human race was a Christian, now in the nineteenth century one man is a Christian out of every five? A failure? I confront the assertion with the most absolute contradiction. I say that, considering the insignificance of our efforts, Missions have been more successful than we had any right to anticipate in our wildest dream. Like a grain of mustard-seed, from well-nigh invisible beginnings, the kingdom of God has grown into a mighty tree.

For what has been the history of Missions? In the first three centuries after Christ, the Gospel,—hated, persecuted, poor—had absolutely conquered a civilization, mighty though effete. From A. D. 400 to A. D. 1000, working from above downwards, it had pervaded the uncivilized life of wild barbarians. From 1000 to 1550 it would seem, indeed, as though the angel of the everlasting Gospel had folded his wings. The church fell into the long dark slumber of the Middle Ages. . . . In the seventeenth century Oliver Cromwell was the first to conceive the modern plan of Missions carried out by organized societies. The idea perished amid and after the foul orgies of the Restoration; but in 1701 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel received its first charter, and that century witnesses the noble efforts of a Wesley in Georgia, of a Berkeley in the Bahamas. Not much, indeed, was achieved amid the torpid Erastianism of the eighteenth century. In 1800 was formed the great Church Missionary Society.

Who will dare to say that the labors of these societies have proved to be a failure? It is less than ninety years since that boat in the Hooghly upset which deprived poor William Carey of all his missionary materials. It is little more than eighty years since, forbidden by the British Government to preach to the Natives, he took refuge in the Danish colony of Serampore. And yet, before Carey died, he published the Bible in the languages of forty tribes, comprising nearly 200,000,000 of the human race. When men complain of the slow progress of Christianity in India, their

complaints are surely absurd. Do they consider how short our sway over the greater part of India has been? An officer who in 1808 served at Tanna, twenty miles north of Bombay, and at that time our northern frontier, forty years later commanded a battalion at Peshawur, one thousand miles north, as the crow flies, of his frontier as a subaltern. Do they consider further that all our missionaries in India put together would only give about one missionary to each 500,000 people, which is as if you had only one minister, instead of five hundred, for all Glasgow? And yet in India there are now hundreds and thousands of converts, and from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas the native idolatries have been sapped and shaken.

Look at *Japan*. Two hundred years ago, over the grave of the Christian martyrs in Japan was written that no Christian for ever was to come to Japan on pain of death. It is but a lifetime since Commodore Perry, laying the Bible on his capstan, over the stars and stripes, made the Bay of Yeddo ring with his first Christian hymn:—

"Before Jehovah's awful throne:
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone,
He can create, and He destroy."

Now there are in Japan some sixty convert congregations often worshipping in churches built of wood from the ruins of Buddhist temples.

Look at *China*. Forty years ago Dr. Morrison was addressing two or three Chinese, who listened in peril of their lives; now there are in China some 50,000 converts. "Do you think," asked the captain of the ship which took him out, "that you can make an impression on the 100,000,000 of Chinese?" "No," he answered, "but God will."

In 1800 there were in Europe but seven missionary societies; now there are more than seventy. There were not eighty mission schools; now there are more than twelve thousand. There were not fifty thousand converts out of all heathendom; now there are 1,650,000. This morning, long ere we rose, converts in China were singing praise to God; then India and Ceylon took up the swelling strain; then it rang with the dawning sun in Eastern and Western Africa; and when it has died away upon our lips it will be echoing on the track of the flying sunset, till, in the late night, it dies away among the far islands of the Western Sea. From the Gothic Bible of Bishop Ulfila, in the fourth century, not one Bible was translated till the nineteenth century in any heathen tongue; now, in more than two hundred languages, of which many had no grammar and no alphabet, and of which some are already dead, there are Bibles to the number of more than 100,000,000. This hath God wrought!

He who talks of Missions as a failure uses the language of ignorant error as an excuse for un-Christian sloth. It is but one lifetime since Samuel Marsden—