

CRITICISMS UPON FOREIGN MISSIONS.

BY REV. EDWIN M. BLISS.

[On page 85 of the February number of *THE REVIEW*, in my paper on "The Results of Missions in the Levant," the sentence, "Up to the present year there have been distributed by the American Bible Society," etc., should have read, "During a single generation, from 1868 up to the present year," etc. The total distribution of the two Bible Societies from the beginning is estimated at about 2,250,000 copies.—E. M. B.]

ATTACKS upon foreign missionaries and their work, such as have appeared recently, voiced in England by Canon Taylor, and echoed in New York by *The Evening Post*, are nothing new. The would-be zeal covers over for the multitude the writer's absolute ignorance of his topic, and many, supposing that position implies knowledge, are inclined to applaud what appears to them a frank looking in the face of important questions. A writer in *The Church Missionary Magazine* has pretty thoroughly riddled Canon Taylor's claim to worthy consideration, showing him up as a man who, having failed in his regular work, has undertaken a sort of guerilla warfare as a free lance in an outside field, in much the same spirit as Napoleon used to start a foreign war—to hide defects of home administration.

Were it possible to penetrate the obscurity surrounding the authorship of an editorial paragraph in a New York daily, it would probably appear that the one who is so earnest lest "poor Sunday-school children should be cheated out of their hard-earned pennies" for the benefit of a school in Athens, or for reconverting an Armenian Christian, is some disappointed agent for a torpedo or rifle manufactory, a naval officer disgusted at being compelled to leave the fashionable charms of Nice, or a chance traveler who goes abroad with the idea that a missionary ought to be a sort of Christian dervish, a Protestant anchorite, like the Greek hermit of Cape Matapan. Such critics it is of little use to argue with. Their attacks are not the result of serious conviction founded upon careful investigation, but upon chance information or constitutional prejudice.

Not all hostile critics, however, are of these two classes. It not infrequently happens that travelers not especially interested in mission work, yet with no positive prejudice against it, receive decidedly adverse impressions; and sometimes those who are genuinely, heartily interested in it, and who make earnest efforts to get at the truth, come to the conviction that missionary work, as carried on, is not what it ought to be.

The opinions of such critics carry weight, and should be fairly and honestly met. Their complaints may in general be included under four classes. 1. That the missionaries do not accurately represent their work to the churches at home. 2. That they are extravagant in the use of funds. 3. That they are not in cordial sympathy with the native Christians and churches. 4. That they pay undue attention to education and civilization to the neglect of spiritual work.