

MISSION FIELD.

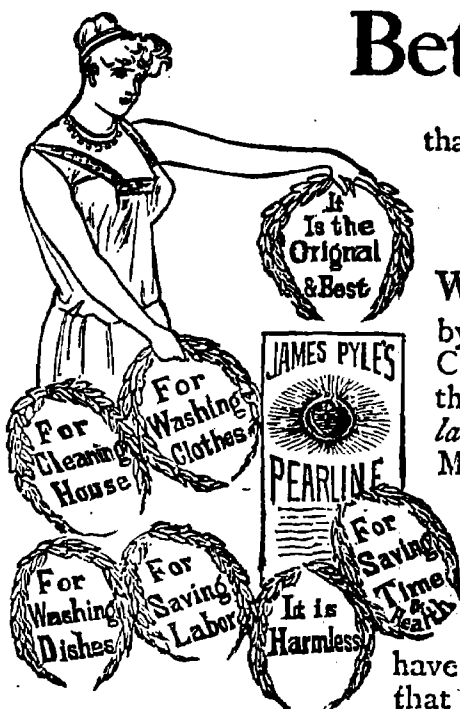
VOCATION FOR MISSIONARY WORK.

(By the Rev. George Frederick McClear, D.D., Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, and Honorary Canon of Canterbury Cathedral.)

(Continued.)

VI.

Lastly, the approval of those competent to form an opinion and advice is a great help in deciding the question of possessing or not a call to Missionary work. The favourable counsel of a wise adviser will solve many difficulties and dissipate many doubts. A man's own judgment is apt to be warped and twisted by personal predisposition. He may set up his "idols in his heart" just as the Jews did in Ezekiel's day, and vanity, which St. Chrysostom calls the besetting sin of those in Orders, or a lurking after display, or a desire to exercise influence over others may be mistaken for nobler impulses. Here the voice and counsel of another is better than a man's own opinion respecting himself. One who judges *ab extra* is often in a better position to decide as regards the claims of home and kindred as compared with a desire to work abroad. "Send me somewhere where I may die in a year," a young man wrote the other day after a terrible bereavement which cast a gloom on his whole life. It is in these cases that the experienced counsellor will suggest care and patient waiting. He will caution one suffering such poignant anguish against rash ventures and impetuous resolves. If he is truly wise and brave, he will tell his friend the truth, he will point out to him this or that inclination which seems to militate against embracing a life holding such great responsibilities. But, on the other hand, he will also faithfully urge all that is fairly to be said in favor of the desire to consecrate one's self to the holiest calling. He will not quench the longing with coldness and lack of sympathy. He will not make much of excuses which are put aside not only at once but thankfully "when there is a prospect of great commercial success or military glory, or the high honours which accompany successful diplomacy." He will not exalt considerations of climate and the injury of health and risk of life and family duties and the like into "lions in the path." He will not listen to the Tempter's oft-repeated question, "Is it worth while?" He will fan every sacred spark, and while he will not mind or shrink from wounding vanity, self-love, and self-assertion, he will labour to sustain the doubting and distrustful, he will animate the modest and retiring, and strive to kindle the enthusiasm of him who, like Moses, exclaims, "I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue," and cannot believe that he is called. If such an adviser—and the like are to be found in not a few villages and towns of our land amongst faithful



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priests and laymen—deems that the indications are favourable, a man may look up and "take courage." If he has the desire to consecrate himself to God's service, and this desire has for its foundation personal piety, and is supported by the possession of inclination and aptitude, and any special gifts fitting him for the work, he may be assured he will not be of the number of those prophets of whom it is said, "I sent not these prophets, yet they ran: I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied." Let him believe the encouraging words, "I will be with thee," and go forward. And why are there so few at Hurstpierpoint, at Denstone, at Ellesmere, at Ardingly, so few in the parsonage homes scattered up and down our land, so few who have been trained in our best National and Sunday schools, who are sensible of vocation for work in the foreign Mission field? Why do so few offer themselves at our Missionary Colleges? Why do articles appear in our reviews on "the great Missionary failure," and, however unjustly, make out that all is in vain? Would this be so if heroes were found more numerous like Bishop Hannington at Uganda, like Philip Samuel Smith of the Oxford Mission to Calcutta, like James Alfred Colbeck of the Burmese Mission, to do what is truly called heroic work for the spread of Christ's Church?

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