

1881



1893

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" THIS IS THE VICTORY, EVEN OUR FAITH."

N.B.—Communications for this Department post-marked after the 18th of the month will appear in following month.

N.E.—All subscriptions for the OUTLOOK must be sent to the Methodist Mission Rooms, Toronto.

N.B.—Certificates of Life Membership may be obtained by addressing Miss Ogden, Room 20, Wesley Buildings.

Our Monthly Reunion.

PRAYER TOPIC.

"That Christian women may recognize their responsibilities to supply the needs of the heathen world."

"For the grace of liberality, for all converts under the care of the W. M. S."

"Rise up, ye women that are at ease; hear my voice, ye careless daughters; give ear unto my speech."—Isa. xxxii. 9.

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."—1 Cor. xvi. 2.

"In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works."—Titus ii. 7.

WITHIN the last thirty years Christian women have been marvellously awakened to a sense of responsibility, and a power of accomplishment before undreamed of, and the result presents a record of progress in Christian work unequalled by any former period. That there are yet in our churches

women who remain untouched by these uplifting influences, and whose little world turns upon their own personal religious privileges and experiences, and their own personal needs and desires, is probably true; in fact, we have all met women so absorbed by the social and domestic routine of their own lives that they find no time to read or disposition to inquire into any matter outside, serenely accepting their narrow duties and pleasures as "woman's sphere," heedless of responsibility even for social example, and quite indifferent to "woman's progress" of any sort. We think of this with pain, but we think of it with charity also. They are not alone blameworthy, rather they are the product of false standards. Nor is there any other rational way of accounting for the vain and frivolous woman whose time is devoted to fashion and gaiety. False standards of woman's sphere and of womanly character were the ideals presented from infancy. Weak and one-sided interpretation of Scripture had for ages been oracularly presented to women as ideals, and the work and education permitted to them were bounded by a very limited horizon.

Their liberties were very restricted, indeed, but tradition and custom, so far as we know, always accorded them the privilege of raising money for churches, charities and missions, etc., and what of woman's work was done flowed out in "quiet" and "modest" channels, in harmony with the principle of unobtrusiveness supposed to be an essential and necessary quantity of a "womanly" make-up. In those days there were no "women's boards," no women's assemblies or conventions. Women who "went before the public" were singers generally, or actresses, etc., and the first woman who ventured to speak her own thoughts, met a very different reception from that given to the one who sang the thoughts of another.

The broad, aggressive, organized work in missions, temperance and various other subjects to-day, which brings women before public audiences, is part of the development of our holy Christianity, which everywhere teaches equality of privilege and opportunity for both sexes. God placed father and mother, sons and daughters, in one family, in one home, that, mutually sharing the blessings, they might be mutually helpful one to another. And we are on the way back to God's original plan, giving to sons and daughters equal place and privilege in schools and colleges, as we shall, we trust, ere long in Church and State. Recalling then all the old-time theories about woman's sphere, we must be slow to rebuke those who still cherish them, and who in our own Churches tell us there is no need for a Woman's Missionary Society, "the General Society could do all that we are doing," etc.—an assertion we very frequently hear in quarters from which we should expect better things. Do not let us reflect unfavorably upon these women. It is not so very long since some of us experienced something like a qualm of conscience when we found ourselves on our feet before an audience or heard the sound of our own voices. All this is the natural outcome of very persistent teaching. We who have accepted the advanced conditions of wo-