

ONWARD MARCH OF MISSIONS.

(Spirit of Missions, U. S.)

It is estimated that since the opening of this century at least 4,000,000 souls have been brought out of heathen darkness into the glorious light of Christian truth. There are to-day 1,166,217 communicants; 4,542 native ministers preaching the Word of life to their own people, and 59,112 are employed as catechists, lay readers and helpers.

During the past year it has been computed that 62,442 souls have been born again into the Kingdom of God from among the heathen. The planting of the standard of the Christian religion in foreign lands has everywhere been followed by a higher civilization, a purer code of morals, and a superior type of manhood. The missionaries have always been the pioneers of civilization—establishing in the very citadels of ignorance and vice, schools and colleges and churches that have reclaimed the lowest type of man, and made of him a citizen worthy of a place among the most honored of men. It is true, sadly true, that with the introduction of Christianity in heathen countries there have also followed the vices and corruptions of so-called civilized nations. This, however, is not the fault of Christianity, but of governments and traders. One has well said: "The seeds of blasting disease planted in the blood of the Hawaiian race by lust and license; the ruin of drunkenness spread through Africa by a flood of vile rum poured in by Christian nations at the rate of 2,600,000 gallons in the year at a single port, and 1,000,000 gallons a year from America; the moral fibre of the Chinese race rotted out by the consumption of nearly 6,000 tons of opium every year, imported from India at a profit of \$32,000,000 to the English government—these facts tell the story of the decay of heathen races—these facts show the forces of evil against which the missionaries are fighting to build up a native Christianity, a native virtue, with almost incredible heroism, and, under God, with miraculous success." In spite of all these obstacles, however, no one who reads the progress of human history, and the great changes that have taken place in hitherto savage and semi-civilized countries, will say that Christian missions do not pay.

The world to-day is ten thousand times better off because of Christian missions than it was one hundred years ago. "Read," says a distinguished layman of Connecticut, "what Julian Hawthorne has just uttered of the missionaries in India; what Stevenson has written of them from his home in the southern seas; what Stanley has said of them in darkest Africa; what generals and ministers of state have affirmed over and over again; yea, even

what some of their fiercest enemies have many times admitted."

When Commodore Perry of the United States Navy sailed into the bay of Yeddo at the head of a great fleet of warships, nearly fifty years ago, to demand of the government of Japan the opening of her ports to western civilization and to Christianity, that hermit nation was full of indignation, hating the foreigner and despising his religion. But look at Japan to-day—ready to take her place alongside the most advanced nations of the world in industries, manufactures, commerce and modern equipment. In her late war with China her superiority was at once recognized. It may be truly said that Japan's present development and progress may be traced back to that memorable occasion when the western world, in the person of Commodore Perry, bade her throw open her fast-closed doors. Another has said: "A hundred years ago, China, Japan, Corea, Siam, were shut within the walls of native bigotry and hatred; India barred by the opposition of the East India Company; Africa hidden behind a barrier of unexplored darkness. Now the walls are down; the gates are open; the way is clear." Yes, let us add more—upon every one of these countries the light of civilization is now breaking; in every one of them the Gospel is being preached by native ministers, and churches and school houses are being built by native Christians, and the highest type of culture earnestly inculcated and sought after.

"I assert it to be a fact," said Rear-Admiral George E. Belknap, of the United States Navy, "beyond contradiction, that there is not a ruler, official, merchant, or any other person, from emperors, viceroys, governors, judges, counsellors, generals, ministers, admirals, merchants and others, down to the lowest coolies in China and Japan, Siam and Corea, who, in their association or dealings with their fellow-men in that quarter of the globe, are not indebted every day of their lives to the work and achievements of the American missionaries."

Consider for a moment what Christian missions have done for the Fiji islanders. When Queen Victoria ascended the throne, sixty years ago, the inhabitants of the Fiji islands were pagan cannibals of the lowest type. Not a ray of Christian religion or civilization penetrated that heathen darkness. To-day the whole race is lifted out of the horrible pit and the miry clay. When the famine was raging so terribly in India, recently, these people raised a fund of £844, and sent it to the sufferers as an expression of their sympathy.

Again, read the testimony of Sir Bartle Frere concerning Christian missions in India: "I speak simply as a matter of experience and