

not being done through some other agency. Let us remember that the multiplication of Mission Bands means the multiplication of missionary churches in the near future, and to those who are now in our Bands, we will look for our missionaries in the days to come.

Woman's Work for Woman.

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The New Testament sounded the key-note of woman's emancipation from the tyranny of old custom, and welcomed her to a share in the active service of redemption. The old dispensation had given a promise which cheered every Hebrew mother's heart with hope, and here and there, as in the stories of Hannah and Ruth and Esther, appeared beautiful illustrations of what woman's influence might accomplish in the world. But outside of the Jewish Church, the worst element in the darkness of heathenism was the oppression of the female sex.

The very fact that woman was specially honored in the advent of the Messiah seemed to presage a new and more ample sphere for her influence. The two sisters at Bethany, instead of being hidden away like the inmates of a Moslem harem and forbidden to share the blessings of the Saviour's visits, seem to have had the same intimate acquaintance and friendship with their brother's guest that would be accorded to the wives or sisters of a modern Christian home. Dorcas was as free and as efficient in her Christian activities as any modern president of an orphan asylum or a woman's home. Priscilla taught theology when crude and un instructed young missionaries needed further training; and of all the men and women in the church in Cenchrea, Phœbe alone was immortalized by her Christian service.

It must have been a matter of disappointment to Paul, when he crossed the Hellespont and entered Philippi, that he did not receive a welcome from that "man of Macedonia" whom he had seen in his vision. But the only welcome he found was in a woman's prayer-meeting by the river side, and Lydia, a woman of affairs and of aggressive Christian influence, became his hostess and his chief patron.

As for the men of Macedonia, his first encounter was with a sordid syndicate who were making merchandise of the wild vagaries of a demented girl. She had been restored and converted and their business was ruined, and in consequence Paul was mobbed. The last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans shows how extensive and how free was woman's work in the church at Rome.

In the days of martyrdom woman bore her part in heroic courage and in suffering unto death. In Carthage and in Rome, in far off France, and wherever the long struggle of Christianity with heathenism was waged, the delicate forms of woman and of girls were tortured and mangled for their faith. In hundreds of instances also woman, who in the bloody invasions of savage tribes was spared from carnage only to be borne into slavery, became a herald of the Cross. Even in the courts of savage kings we find her the centre and source of gospel light. The conversion of Vladimir of Russia through his Byzantine wife was a case in point.

In no country has woman's early influence in the propagation of the faith been more remarkable than in France and Britain. Clovis on the eve of battle vowed that if victory should be given him he would thereafter worship the God of his Christian wife, Clotilda. The victory was won and in pursuance of his vow he was baptized with

three thousand of his court and his army. It has been truly said that not merely Clovis and his army were baptized, but a great empire and the whole civilization and destiny of Western Europe.

When the rude Saxons of Britain were to be reclaimed, and that Christianity which their avagary had well-nigh trodden out on the shores of Kent was to be restored, the way was opened by a Christian princess of Burgundy, who in her marriage to the King of Kent had stipulated that she should be free to worship the true God and His Christ. Canterbury was really founded by Queen Bertha, who prepared the way for Augustine and his monks.

In the modern movement of Christian benevolence the women of the Roman Catholic Church were earlier in the field than those of the Protestant churches; but they worked under the rules and restrictions of conventual orders. It is quite to the credit of Romanism that its sisterhoods have in modern times been mobilized for active service at home and abroad. Though the missionary idea in the Roman Catholic Church is that of a celibate priest, yet the Sisters of Charity go in groups to all lands, and their hospitals and orphanages rise up as by magic wherever human suffering is found. Only praise and commendation can be given to the self-denying devotion with which this noble work is done.

But a far better development of woman's work in missions and in all benevolence is that which has been shown in Protestant Christendom within the last quarter of a century—better, first, because it is freer; second, because it aims at the subsidizing, not of a professional class, but of all Christian womanhood for the work of Christ; and, third, because the example and influence of the married and unmarried women of Protestant missions are more positive than that of isolated sisterhoods. They illustrate the home—of which China and India know nothing—instead of the convent, which Buddhism already has; and they give stronger emphasis to the freedom which all women should claim.

It may be said that on the home side the woman's work of Protestantism does not in fact subsidize all the talent and moral power of Christian womanhood in the Church. This is, indeed, too true, but its tendency is in that direction; that is its ideal and its aim, and in no other one enterprise has so large a portion of its membership, male or female, been enlisted as in woman's missionary work. We have observed the growth and operations of women's foreign missionary societies for the last twenty years, and have been more and more impressed by their stability in organization and their advance in efficiency and power.

In all Protestant churches the impulse is one and universal. Suspensions, doubts, and fears which conservative men entertained at the outset have disappeared. No denomination would think of dispensing with this potent auxiliary force. It were difficult to say whether its success abroad, great as it is, or its reflex power at home, has been the greater.

The late Dr. Mullens, of the London Missionary Society, maintained that, as a uniform law, home charities of every kind had grown out of the broader and deeper movements that have been stirred by the spectacle of woman's debasement in heathen lands. He traced nearly all the societies for evangelization in Great Britain to the antecedent impulses which arose about the beginning of the century to give the gospel to distant lands.

Whatever may have been the facts in England, it is certain that the great tide of sympathy which first sprang up in the hearts of American women for their enslaved sisters in the zenanas of India has inured to the good of our own frontier settlements and of the freed men in the