

## OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

### CHRISTIAN WORK IN GERMANY.

#### THE INNER MISSION.

The term "Inner Mission" is frequently met with in periodicals, in which reference is made to religious matters in Germany. It is doubtful, however, whether the majority of those who see it, or even all those who use it, have clear ideas as to the full meaning of the word, or, at all events, of all that it comprehends. For myself, I must confess, that until a recent visit to Berlin, my views regarding it were rather obscure. It was always associated in my mind with our Home Mission work, which forms but a very small part of what it includes. Assuming that some who may read this letter have similar difficulties regarding this subject, it may not prove useless to enumerate a few of the works embraced in the "Inner Mission," as understood in Germany, even although this may to some appear to be dry and uninteresting. In this way, I think a better idea of what is included in the term, will be gained, than any more formal definition would convey. During my stay in the capital I visited several of the institutions connected with the Inner Mission, and studied their working, and if space permit, may share with the readers of THE PRESBYTERIAN, the information I gained, if they feel at all interested in such subjects.

The Inner Mission, as understood in Germany, comprises two classes of institutions or societies:

I. Those which strictly and properly accomplish its special work; and (II) those which in a wider and more general sense, subserve its purposes. Under the first class are included:

1. Societies which look after the interests of the poor and the sick. Of these there are eight which are specially for nursing sick men, women and children; and seven for relieving sick, aged and infirm men and women. In this work deaconesses generally are employed. In addition to these societies, thirty-five of the parish churches of Berlin, have in connection with them, societies, male and female, whose duty it is to seek out and aid the sick and the poor within their respective parishes, forming sewing and knitting classes for some, providing soup kitchens for others, opening schools for little children, classes for domestic servants, savings banks, Sunday schools, etc. Another set of societies, under this head, have for their special task, to teach the poor so to husband their earnings as to prevent absolute poverty. Others again aim at finding and relieving such as have fallen into want, no matter from what cause, and are ashamed to ask aid from the public, and this without any reference to their religious belief. Assistance, in this case is extended, in the way of finding work for those able and willing to work, providing suitable clothes and education for their children, and appropriate dwellings, medicines, etc., for the parents. There is also a society for helping poor blind persons of both sexes, and irrespective of creed, both as regards the needs of the body and the spirit, especially by attending to the moral training of the children so as to make them useful members of the family.

2. Institutions and societies whose aim is the training of the young and the care of children, specially orphans. Of these there are twenty in Berlin, several of them bearing the names of persons who left money as a capital for their foundation, and who prescribed the conditions as to age, etc., under which children can be admitted. Others of them were commenced and are still carried on by Christian ladies, with the view of saving females from ruin—by looking after women and girls who come from the country to seek situations, to lodge them temporarily, to instruct them in household duties, and in every way to help them to lead a moral life. Some institutions receive little children, who have not attained school age, extending to them protection, training them in a Christian way, and awakening in them love and respect for God, their king and country—of these there are as many as thirty-eight in the city and suburbs.

3. Institutions and societies for the promotion of Church, moral, and Christian life. Of these there are thirty-four—some of them specially seek the good of the German Evangelical Church; others engage in city mission work which seems to be well organized in Berlin, though I was told that those who managed it, mix up too freely politics with religion. Some of these societies prosecute Sunday school work and provide tem-

porary homes for young men out of employment, or such as come from the provinces in search of work. Others publish moral and religious literature for the public. Bible and tract societies and young men's Christian associations belong to this department of the work, which even includes classes for young men of different nationalities for the study of evangelical theology, philosophy, history, etc., libraries being provided, professors come from the University to give instruction. Under this head are to be found societies for promoting the sanctification of the Sabbath, for aiding poor pastors, building churches in destitute localities, assisting dismissed prisoners, fallen females, Jewish proselytes, etc.

II. Under the second class, viz., the societies and institutions which, in a wider sense, help to promote the general objects of the Inner Mission, are included:

1. Those who charge themselves with looking after the wants of the poor and the sick, in a special sense, such, for instance, as the Prussian society for taking care of sick and wounded soldiers on the field of battle; the central committee of the German society of the "Red Cross," and the "Fatherland's Women Society." In war time these societies find occupation sufficient in attending to the sick and wounded. In time of peace, they seek to mitigate, by immediate help, the sufferings caused by epidemics, famine or dear prices, floods, fire or similar calamities. They also charge themselves with the higher training of female nurses, the restoration and improvement of houses for the sick and such works. Under this head there is a society for the prevention of destitution "through the regulation of private acts of beneficence." House and street begging are absolutely forbidden in Germany, hence greater care has to be taken in seeking out the poor and in ministering to their necessities, by helping them to find employment, etc. There is also a society for attending to the wants of "lying-in-women" and motherless children. For this purpose Berlin is divided into thirty-five districts, with a lady in each to whom application in all such cases is to be made, and whose duty it is to report to the central committee. There is also a *crèche* society which erects *asyls* in which healthy children, or at least such as are free from infectious diseases, from the age of six weeks to the end of their third year, can be placed during the day, while the parents are at work outside their houses.

2. Institutions and societies for the promotion of the moral and economical well-being of the people. Under this head is a home for the daughters of the higher classes, such as officials, officers, clergymen, doctors, etc., during a period sufficient to complete their education and fit them, by the acquisition of some profession, for earning a livelihood. There is also a society for the education of females generally—to enable them to make their own way in the world.

3. There is also a Fröbel society for assisting young girls to become teachers of children on the Kindergarten system, nurses, etc. Under this head too are societies for attending to the welfare of youth who have left school, for alleviating the wants of the working classes, small manufacturers and tradesmen, and for teaching the poor to cook their food economically, etc.

From this *resume* of the work of the "Inner Mission" it will be seen how

#### COMPREHENSIVE ITS OBJECTS

are. It embraces what we are in the habit of classing under such heads as philanthropic, benevolent, moral and religious societies, and many more. Apparently, at least, the work of some of these societies overlaps that of others. I was struck with the fact that comparatively few of these institutions date from an earlier period than 1848 or 1850. The majority of them, indeed, are of much more recent origin. Several of the most useful and valuable of them owe their existence to the late Dr. Wichern, the founder of the celebrated "Rauhe Haus" at Horn, a suburb of Hamburg, who set an example in his treatment of bad and depraved youth of both sexes, which is now being followed advantageously in almost every civilized nation. His name is a household word in every part of the Fatherland, and some of those whom he was instrumental in rescuing from moral ruin, and in whose hearts he succeeded in kindling high and holy aspirations, are to be found in almost every country, some of them engaged in similar work as that of their revered benefactor, and others preaching the blessed Gospel which alone can "bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the

prison to them that are bound." An account of my visits to some of the Berlin institutions, I must leave for another letter.

T. H.

Dresden, Saxony, March, 1883.

#### THE WANT OF MINISTERS.

MR. EDITOR,—At the close of the meeting of the Home Mission Committee in Toronto last autumn the Superintendent of Missions held up a list of applications from fields in the North-West for which no appointments had been made—thirteen, if I recollect aright—and asked if the committee were going to adjourn without doing anything for them. He stated that the stations were prepared, with the aid which the committee could give them, to undertake the financial responsibility themselves. The reply was that the committee could do nothing, as all the available men had been appointed already. A suggestion was made, however, that the matter might be brought before the ministers in settled charges, and that some of them might be willing to go west. This was all that the committee could do, but the proposal was somewhat like *et cetera* at the end of an attempted answer to a difficult question in an examination. It meant little more than a momentary relief from an apprehensive sense of helplessness and vacuity.

If the appeal had been successful it would have resulted in the transference of weakness in men and revenue from one part of the field to another. As it turned out scarcely anyone responded to the appeal. I mention this because it is an illustration by a fact of the condition of the Church in regard to the supply of ministers. And it is not merely a matter of the more equitable distribution of labourers. All over the country this want is felt, and not in Canada only, but in the United States. It is not necessary here to enter into an enquiry as to the cause of this. It may be that the idea which was somewhat prevalent until very recently that the Church was in great danger of suffering from congestion of the brain, or the heart from a plethora of ministers, has had something to do with it. It is reasonable to think, however, that the difficulty had not arisen so much from any falling off in the supply as from the extraordinary extension of the field for which the supply is required, and from the fact that the enlargement has been so phenomenal in its rapidity. There is such a thing as *inertia* in nature, and there is necessarily a good deal of nature in the Church. It takes time before the nerves of her spiritual being thrill with the message of her need, and time before the responsive throb can make its way from the heart.

From the number of references to this subject it is evident that there is a *spontaneous generation* of thought on it. The *drift* of the current is in two directions. In the first place appeals are made to young men and to their pastors, in the hope that a greater number may be led to consecrate their lives to the work of the ministry, and there is every reason to expect good results from this, the classes in the colleges will no doubt be larger than they would otherwise have been.

But the question remains what is to be done in the meantime? Those who may come forward to begin their studies in response to this appeal will not be really available for six or eight years, and to speak of this to our mission fields is like telling a man perishing of thirst that steps are being taken to dig a well, or a starving man that fields are being ploughed better than usual, and that as the season has opened favourably, there is a good prospect of an abundant harvest. We may well change the metaphor and in the words of our Lord say, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

This pressing need of immediate help is directing attention therefore more than ever to another quarter, and emphatic testimony is borne on all hands to the great working power which the Church possesses in her eldership and other earnest men. This testimony has, however, been borne all along. The Church has theoretically held that her elders and laymen—men of piety, earnestness, and ability ought to take a more active part in the work which usually falls almost exclusively upon ministers.

But so far, with here and there exceptions, which abundantly illustrate what might be done with very unsatisfactory results, the mine remains almost unworked, little more of the rich ore being brought to the surface and put into actual service than is necessary to replace the loss and wear of circulation. There