

Reflex Influence of Missions.

THE GRAND AIM OF MISSIONS is to make the glad tidings of salvation known throughout the world. This is the all-important matter, which must be kept before the minds of Christian people. It is well, however, to note that there are many incidental gains in connection with Foreign Mission work. Our children, for example, are familiar with Formosa because of our mission there; and from Formosa they start in imagination for China and Japan. They also feel a deeper interest in India and know more about that vast empire of two hundred and fifty millions, on account of the band of faithful men and women from our own Church who are toiling there. The New Hebrides have become a household word, near and dear to thousands, because Williams and Geddie and the Gordons and Morrison laboured there, and because we are still represented there by three missionaries and their wives. So, too, with Trinidad; what would we care for that island and its Asiatics were it not that our missionaries are engaged in preaching the Gospel and planting the Christian Church among those benighted Hindoo coolies? We follow our missions in our prayers and meditations over lonely seas and vast continents; we go with them to the sunny coasts of South America, and the still sunnier isles of the Pacific. We cross the ocean to beautiful Formosa; and we wander at will over the hills and plains of India. The heart is enlarged; the imagination quickened. We attain a livelier conception of the unity of the human race, and of the claims upon us to evangelize wherever we can.

When we read of the condition of the heathen we are better able to appreciate the value of the Gospel. Even in relation to this life it is unspeakably precious. See the condition into which the peoples have sunk who knew not God! See what we would be if the Gospel had not reached us! The most embarrassing and distressing obstacle that meets Christian missionaries abroad is the wickedness of people who are from Christian lands, and who should be Christians but are not. Dr. Geddie often spoke of the anguish and distress, the bloodshed and misery caused in the New Hebrides by white traders and lawless adventurers. The same difficulty under various forms has confronted missions in India, China, Japan and almost everywhere. The "reflex influence" of this fact should be to lead the churches at home to war with redoubled zeal against all ungodliness at home, so that no "devil's missionaries" should ever go forth to heathen lands.

Sir Alfred Lyall, Lieut.-Governor of the North-Western Provinces of India, anticipates a wide and rapid change in the religious views of the people. Education is spreading rapidly,

and the old gods of Hinduism will die in their new elements of intellectual light and air as quickly as a net-full of fish lifted up out of the water. Their primitive forms will disappear suddenly as witchcraft vanished out of Europe. The movement promises to go on with a speed and intensity unprecedented. Sir Alfred is not sanguine that Christianity will step in and do for India what it did once for the Roman Empire. Why? The reason he gives is: "The state of thought in western Europe." The opportunity is offered to Christianity; the mighty upheaval is at hand; but "Western Christians" have not, it is feared, enough of faith, fervour, zeal and earnestness. They are divided among themselves. They "bite and devour" one another. And all the while Infidelity sends its messages from Europe to Asia—its messages of materialistic and agnostic science. Is there not here ground enough for self-inspection among Christians?—ground enough for an attitude of earnest aggressive warfare against unbelief wherever found? Christianity must present a fairer, a purer, a more united front to Hinduism before such conquests are achieved as adorned the annals of the early Christian ages. And what is true abroad is true at home. Christians here and everywhere need closer union; greater consistency of conduct; a more fervent zeal; a larger charity. We have "heathens" at home—there is no doubt of it. The Book and Tract Society, whose headquarters are at Halifax, had twelve colporteurs traversing the Maritime Provinces during the year, and found *two hundred and five* Protestant families without a page of the Bible or of any good book in their dwellings. If this is true of the Maritime Provinces, we cannot doubt but a similar exploration would discover similar facts in other Provinces. Is this any argument against Foreign Missions? By no means. The meaning of the facts is that when we are awake to the claims of the heathen world then and not till then do we become anxious about the destitute nearer home. If those to whom the Gospel has never been preached are in a deplorable condition, still more dreadful is the condition of those who lapse into heathenism in lands that are Christian. We bid God-speed to the Home Missionary just because we send forth the Foreign Missionary; and if we support the one we dare not neglect the other.

REVIVALS.—We read deeply interesting reports of revivals of religion in mission fields which for a long period showed little apparent progress. In Turkey, in Egypt, in India, the Spirit has been poured forth abundantly and multitudes have been converted. The seed sown for years appears to be bearing fruit suddenly unto eternal life. Revivals are reported also from many sections of the United States.