

I.—THE MISSION FIELD.

Let us glance at that field, which "is the world." The first thing that strikes us is the great increase of our knowledge of the world and its inhabitants. A hundred years ago the vast regions of heathenism were comparatively a blank to the minds of most Christians. Of the hundreds of millions in China, we knew little beyond the meagre information to be gathered from the journals of The Poles, and of Roman Catholic Missions, and from a few traders on the coast, ignorant of the language of the people. Vast tracts of India were untrodden by the feet of our countrymen, whose almost sole concerns were trade and conquest. Africa was a *terra incognita* beyond a few miles from Egypt and the Cape, except for a few bold but imperfect explorations up the Nile and the Niger. Our maps of the interior were either a blank or a blunder—deserts and plains, where lakes and rivers, and mountains have been discovered, with a teeming population and fertile soil.

This vast increase of our knowledge acts in a two-fold way on the Christian Church. First, it excites interest in, and sympathy for, the poor and the perishing; and second, it awakens a sense of responsibility for those with whom we seem by our knowledge to be brought into personal relations. The question, "Who is my neighbor?" acquires a new meaning and a wider scope. Our fellow man who has fallen among thieves, is now found by the Samaritan spirit in the Church, not on the way down from Jerusalem to the neighboring city, Jericho; he is found wounded by sin, and robbed of his Divine inheritance by the idolatries of heathenism and the deceptions of the false prophet in all lands.

This feeling of sympathy and sense of responsibility are greatly intensified by the facilities for easy and rapid communication with all parts of the world. It makes us realize that we are now in that period of prophetic history, when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." The whole world is now at our door. It is only a few weeks easy travel by land or sea to reach the most distant parts. By post and telegraph we know daily what takes place in the most remote regions. We seem to hear the sounds of sorrow and woe in the dark places of the earth, and to feel the anxious beating of the hearts of the thousand millions of the world's inhabitants who are ignorant of God and of His Christ.

II.—THE OPENINGS IN THE MISSION FIELD.

If we compare the world a hundred years ago with what it is now, the calls to work and sense of responsibility will be intensified a thousand fold. When our Protestant missions began China was hermetically sealed. It was death to preach the Gospel in Japan. India was closed against all missionaries; even our own countryman, Carey, had to seek shelter on a little plot of ground owned by a foreign