

have been marvellous and are unparalleled in history. But we are apt to gain too much confidence as we think of the past and forget the woeful needs of to-day. After all said and done, it is still true that the great majority of those for whom Christ died are still without knowledge of Him, and this truth is the more saddening when we remember that such could not long be the case, if everyone who is called by Christ's name were bearing it worthily. Why is it that almost every Missionary Society is calling for more funds, and is seriously hampered by the lack of them, if it is not that Christians are not truly following Christ? We need not go outside of our own little Convention and the various organizations it represents to be sure that missions are not making the progress they should.

Looking for hindrances is not an ideal task. If you are engaged on an important piece of work you feel annoyed if something hinders you, and you have to stop to find out the hindrance and remove it, you would consider the time better spent in directly continuing your work. Yet, to-day, how many columns of printed matter and hours of precious time must be devoted to the dreary task of searching out obstacles, when they ought to be better spent in the more direct work of praise and service. But as long as we are of the earth and do our work imperfectly we shall have to lose time in this way, so we will set ourselves to the task.

If I were to ask some of the delegates present, representing our Circles in country, town, or city, what they considered the greatest hindrances to their work in the home churches, I think the answers would run somewhat as follows:—

"We cannot get the women of our church out to a meeting to learn and talk about missions. Distances are so great and weather and roads often such that it is impossible for us to meet regularly," or, "We have no one to be leader since Mrs. Willingworker moved away, so our Circle has fallen to pieces, and interest in mission work is at a very low ebb." Or we may even hear so pitiful a story as this:—"Our officers had a difference and two or three resigned and there is such ill-feeling in the church that Missions have no place in the people's hearts."

Another might tell us,— "Half the women of our church do not believe in missions, and even think the missionaries' lot more enjoyable than theirs, and they will not give to their support," or "Many of our members are forgetful of Circle day and will not spare time for it from social engagements. We have great difficulty in getting anyone to help to make our meetings attractive. It is so monotonous for the same few to do all the work."

And lastly, but far from being least in importance, comes the old worn-out complaint, "Times are so hard,

we cannot spare any money for missions!" (Some writer remarks that times are always hard when money is wanted for the Kingdom).

These then are the reasons why our work is not being done as it should be. These are the reasons which we must present to our Master when He asks us bye-and-bye why we have brought so few souls with us into His kingdom. What a dreary list it is! And how these constant complaints must grieve the heart of our Saviour!

But a glance at the hindrances named assures us that they are the outgrowth of some more serious shortcomings—offshoots of a stalk so deeply rooted that we may say of it truly, "This kind cometh not out but by prayer and fasting." Let us consider four of the great causes which lie back of the petty hindrances that so hamper our work. First among them comes the fact that there is far too little conversation with our Master among the women of our churches—far too few confidences exchanged between ourselves and Him. "Oh," you say, "you are telling us that we ought to pray more—we know that—we are tired of hearing it." Yes, my fellow-worker, and have you acted upon your knowledge until God is tired of hearing you pray? You must confess, I must confess that we have not. The fact that we know so well the need of prayer, makes all the sadder the fact that we do not pray. Here we are given a task which we ourselves are powerless to perform, yet we stubbornly turn from the only Power that can help us. We want more prayer, and a special kind of prayer. Do you remember how the Syro-Phoenician woman prayed when she followed Jesus so persistently? "Have mercy on me O Lord, Thou Son of David! Have mercy on me, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil!" Why did she pray "Have mercy on me." Because her daughter's need was so much her own that her cry was the outcome of a great personal grief. How many of us do you suppose plead for missions in this way? "Oh Lord, have mercy upon me, my soul is bowed down. My brethren in India are dying without Thee. Millions for whom Christ died know Thee not! Lord help me!" Christ could not refuse to answer such prayer. But we do not make the needs of the perishing our own, and why? Because many of us do not know what those needs are. Ignorance of the unfruitful parts of the vineyard makes such prayer impossible. But is this ignorance excusable? Surely, in this day and age when so much is written, and printed, and spoken on the subject of missions, no one can remain ignorant of the needs of the field without guilt. We could know if we would, and from him to whom much has been given, much will be required. And in our prayer, not only should we identify ourselves with the needy, but we should also identify ourselves with our God. When Aa, King of