

## MISSION FIELD.

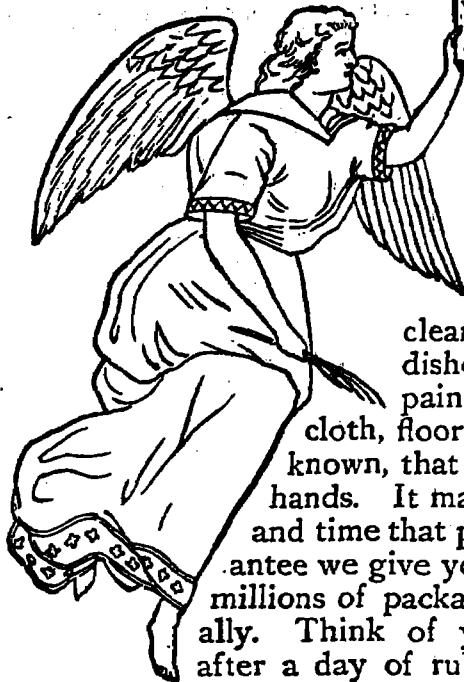
## VOCATION FOR MISSIONARY WORK.

(By the Rev. George Frederick McClear, D.D., Warden of St. Augustine's College, Canterbury, and Honorary Canon of Canterbury Cathedral.)

(Continued.)

## IV.

*Inclination and Aptitude for Missionary Work*—But it is not sufficient that a candidate should have personal piety, and be well reported of for leading a blameless life. He may be all that is said of him, but he must have, besides, some really manifest tokens of real aptitude for the work. "We need," said an eminent Missionary a little time ago from the diocese of St. John's, Kaffraria, "almost better men than those whom you employ in England. If vague, undisciplined enthusiasm avails little at home, if it requires here to be balanced by modesty, humility, a readiness to obey, and a willingness to submit to a diligent and self-denying preparation, it avails quite as little abroad, and demands still more the same balance of other gifts and graces in dealing with non-Christian peoples." It is the failure to recognise this which has sent some men to Missionary Colleges whose presence is a source of wonder and misgiving. Often a youth who has been good and acceptable as a chorister and lay helper, shows unexpected failings at a Theological College, and yet more in Holy Orders. "When character is poor and uncultivated," says the Chancellor of Truro, "come in contact with finer work than they can really grasp, their deficiencies become painfully apparent. Many of them have had no real discipline, and inherit no traditions, whether of family or place of education. This is what is overlooked by those who advocate the admission of men of humble origin, indiscriminately, and without signs of real fitness for the position of a Missionary Priest." In the middle ages such men had been for years in schools and at the universities, as is the case at various seminaries in the Roman Communion now. A boy who should go at thirteen or fourteen from a shop on to the foundation at Winchester, and then to New College, and so pass on to some Missionary College, would be a very different person from the same individual immersed up to twenty-two in all the petty details of his calling, and then sent straight away to such a place as St. Augustine's. This is why stress has to be laid on special aptitude. It is not sufficient to have been roused by some Missionary address, or confronted by some crushing bereavement with the mystery of life and the nearness of eternity. A man must have backbone. He must have application. He must have the desire to grapple with, and not shrink from, the irksome details of preparation. He must have at least some capacity for languages. The impulses of a personal piety must not be mistaken



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for a call to work abroad. An appointment ought not to be thrown up, or a profession abandoned, for the idea of Mission engagements without some distinct indications of fitness for the same. "God," it has been well said, "has many services," and "some of these can be performed better by a layman than by one in Orders. The withdrawal of a consistent Christian man from the ranks of the professions or of business is a weakening of that particular calling, which no man has a right to inflict upon it unless he has the most unequivocal assurance of special aptitude, and that God is indeed calling him to the higher service." This is a consideration which needs to be duly weighed, for one of the most important things Missionary students need to have impressed upon them is the formation of *really studious habits*. They are far too apt to imagine that the mere fact that they have devoted themselves to a work implying self-sacrifice and hardship, is to be regarded as a sufficient proof of fitness, and are wont to be surprised if this is doubted. The formation of studious habits depends as much as anything else on perseverance, pluck, determination, and a realization of the fact that if God does not really need a man's knowledge and intellectual acquirements. He still less needs his ignorance and inability to apply.

(To be continued.)

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