

MISSION-FIELD.

THE BISHOP OF DERRY ON SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONS.

The annual sermon on behalf of the South American Missionary Society was preached in St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Derry. This is the only Society in Great Britain sending both missionaries to the heathen and ministers for the English-speaking people of the vast and rapidly developing continent of South America outside the limits of British Guiana. The organization was commenced as the Patagonian Mission in 1844, was reformed in 1852, and designated the South American Missionary Society in 1864. The Bishop of the Falkland Islands (the Right Rev. Dr. Stirling) is the superintendent of all the society's stations. The field of operations extends over an area of more than 7,000,000 of square miles, with a population of nearly 30,000,000, this being the only Church of England Mission in South America except that in British Guiana. The objects of the society are missionary, ministerial and evangelistic. Missionary work is carried on amongst the numerous Indian tribes of South America; ministerial work amongst the many communities of English-speaking people scattered throughout this continent and among the sailors who frequent its harbors; and evangelistic work amongst the native people speaking Spanish and Portuguese where opportunities offer, as well as amongst persons of other nationalities, by means of special services; and, above all, the distribution by sale of the Bible in the native languages.

The Bishop of Derry, in the course of his sermon, is reported to have said that the South American Mission was the only one among their Church missions which addressed itself more or less to 30,000,000 of the human race. It had succeeded already in a very marvellous degree with numerous native tribes supposed to be of the lowest type and mould. It worked amongst thousands of settlers and sailors on the seaboard of South America, and it was more or less, without being directly proselytizing in any way, a witness for good to the corrupt churches of these districts. The Bishop of London lately said upon a public occasion that the South American Mission had a right to be ranked, if not exactly in the same place, yet at all events in the same class and category, with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Church Missionary Society. He trusted that those were words of good augury for the society.

The South American Missionary Society was possessed of three unparalleled trophies. One of these trophies was a common-place looking manuscript volume. He had seen, as had probably some of the congregation, that book at the

meetings of the society. This touching volume contained the dying words of Captain Allen Gardiner, who, with his six companions, perished of slow starvation at Spaniard Harbour, in September, 1831. Captain Gardiner wrote, "I am passing through the furnace, but blessed by my Heavenly Shepherd. He is with me and I shall not want. I trust poor Eugenia and South America will not be abandoned. Missionary seed has been sown here, and the Gospel message ought to follow. If I had a wish for the good of my fellow-men, it is that the Tierra del Fuego Mission might be prosecuted with vigour, and the work in South America commenced." Should not that prayer echo in their hearts that day? The body of Capt. Allen Gardiner was found four long months afterwards, but owing to the climate was untouched by decay, and when his remains and those of his companions were found the language of the funeral service was read over them. The second trophy that the society possessed was a beautiful medal given by the King of Italy to the managers of the society as a token of recognition of the kind help bestowed on the shipwrecked crew of one of his war vessels by those very savages who were a terror to all sailors not many years before. The third trophy he referred to was the subscription and attestation of that great man, the late Mr. Darwin, who had once believed that the savages of that coast were incapable of being raised in the scale of humanity.

A missionary, describing a Christian funeral in Japan, says: "Some would have considered the funeral very 'ritualistic.' The coffin was carried on a bier borne by six men for more than two miles through the city, and was preceded by a Japanese holding aloft a large wooden cross. You can always tell the graves of Christians in the Japanese cemetery, for they are all marked with crosses, Episcopal, Congregational, Presbyterian, Roman and Greek—all have the cross for a head-board."

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