

## The Missionary World.

SOME term the May Meetings "religious dissipation"; others consider them real work. This year they are only justified for those who regard them in the latter light. It is a time when we are bound to be serious in all things and to cast out of our allowed expenditure of money, time and strength all that is not charged with real purpose and related to vital issues. Our fear concerning this year's meetings is not that men may take them lightly, but rather that because anxiety has been so keen concerning each separate society and efforts for the maintenance of its work have been so strenuous, we may narrow our outlook to the agencies—whether few or many—with which we are directly concerned, and see the various organizations in isolation rather than as part of a great Divine enterprise embracing all the world. It is the aim of these pages to suggest some wider thoughts which May-meeting-goers may do well to keep in mind.

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The first fact that the May Meetings impress upon us is the enormous number of separate organizations for foreign missions. There are a growing number among us who feel that in due time some adjustment is needed here, and who look with desire towards the method of the Presbyterian churches which direct their own work through committees appointed by themselves. But the "due time" is not yet, and the apotheosis of the Missionary Society, either abroad by its absorption into the Church on the Mission Field or at home by its absorption into the direct activities of the whole Church at the home base, is an ideal which will be destroyed if hastily grasped at. It can at present best be sought after by an active, self-sacrificing and enlightened support of the many voluntary bodies—whether great or small—which hold their meetings this month. It is significant that the Continuation Committee of the World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh, 1910, has from the first regarded itself as the servant of the missionary agencies, and that all its work is done in conjunction with the Societies and Boards, or committees appointed by the Churches who act direct.

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The practical question of the moment is that of co-operation between missionary agencies, not along lines of compromise but by

means of combination in the fulfilment of common tasks. The April number of the *International Review of Missions* contains a striking illustration of what is taking place. The new section opened for "Proceedings of Co-operative Bodies in the Mission Field" summarizes in seven pages the minutes of the National Missionary Council of India held last December. That influential body, which has amongst its members the Metropolitan of India, the Bishops of Bombay, Chota Nagpur and Dornakal, and men and women representing all the main missionary bodies in India, approved and issued a weighty statement on comity among missions; carried forward arrangements for a missionary survey of India; received reports from committees on the Indian Church, mass movements, Christian education, medical missions and the training of missionaries; and passed unanimously a resolution concerning German missions in India characterized by loyalty to the principles of Christian brotherhood and true citizenship. Many indications of the increase of co-operation at the home base of missions emerge also in the closing section of the *Survey of 1915* with which the April number of the *Review* opens. Every opportunity for co-operation between missionary bodies should be welcomed and supported to the full.

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Another great idea which claims place in our missionary thinking is the national aspect of the work. We are beginning to see the home work of the societies grouped not only under churches but into great national units. Through the report of the Conference of Foreign Mission Boards we learn in the *International Review* what America has done in 1915; then, in the "Survey of the Year," we pass from one country to another, gradually focussing the record of a wonderful year of deliverance, till, on subsequent pages, Dr. Karl Fries leads us in a careful study of Swedish missions, showing the various agencies at work and the various fields occupied. The missions of Sweden are henceforth represented by a unified conception in our minds. The national aspect of missions is still more important on the foreign side. Here it is specially easy to fail to see the wood because of the trees. It takes time and careful study to get an inclusive view of the actual work of missions, in all its related parts, in a great eastern or African sphere, but at least one can set a background of the land itself behind the organization one

knows best, while one is slowly relating that organization to the work of all others.

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Take, for instance, China: Dr. Robert E. Speer gives in the current number of the *International Review of Missions* a striking survey of "The General Environment of Missions in China at the Present Time," which, together with *The Times* leader of March 22 on "The Rebellion in China" and several subsequent telegrams, and a note in the current number of *China's Millions*, forms a background against which the work of some long known missionary stands out with new meaning. He and his station become part of a whole instead of being merely the whole of a part. The great problem of China weights every detail given about his work.

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Or take India; focus upon the speaker at the May Meeting whose station we support the light from the article on "The Burmese Hermit" in *The East and The West*, in which Mr. Purser shows the gradual ingathering, with many followers, of a faithful soul from the partial truths of Buddhism to the full rest of Christian faith, and that from the article in the *International Review of Missions* where Dr. Macnicol so beautifully shows the seeking of "Hindu Devotional Mysticism" after God Himself; carry over into our listening the strong encouragement of Mr. Sherwood Eddy's record of "The Present Situation in India" in the *International Review of Missions*, linking with its moving record of the great united meetings of the Syrian Christians the account of the early C.M.S. effort "To Benefit the Syrian Church" given in the April number of the *C.M. Review*; add to this a realization of all that lies behind the good news of the abolition of Indian Indentured Labour reported in *The Times* of March 22, and again the work of the one man in his own station becomes part of the great age-long enterprise of the Church, and he marches not alone but as part of the army of God.

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In like manner there will be at the May Meetings stories of work in Moslem lands as thrilling in individual interest as that in which Miss Marie Stuart in the *C.M. Gleaner* tells of her journey from Ispahan, but we need the setting provided for them by a careful study of the solid teaching on Islam in the *Moslem World*, and also by the fine paper by Dr. James L. Barton on the work of "American

Missions in Turkey." His statement of signs of encouragement in *The East and The West* is highly stimulating. He notes that the solidarity of Mohammedanism appears to be shaken; that there has been an unusual sale of New Testaments during the last two or three years in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean; that the Mohammedans of Turkey have awakened to the importance of western education; that the faithfulness of the Armenians under persecution has made a deep impression on the Moslems; and that repugnant and horrible as is the taking of Christian girls by force into Moslem harems, it is yet introducing the leaven of Christian truth into the very centre of the social life of Islam. A curious historical light on the relation of the Great Powers to Islam is cast by a short review in the *Moslem World* of a French book, "Bonaparte et l'Islam," showing that Napoleon's attitude to Islam was much the same as that of the present German Emperor; and with this one naturally links the counter balancing evidence discovered by General Smuts in German East Africa, showing that in its original colonizing projects Germany was more clear of complicity in the advance of Islam than other Christian governments, including our own, have been.

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As one further suggestion for the larger thought behind the more individual aspects of the May Meetings, we would suggest a remembrance of the problem of the provision and preparation of missionaries. The "Survey of the Year 1915" in the *International Review of Missions* shows in land after land how missionary forces have been depleted, and still more how the student bases in all belligerent countries have been robbed of men. In the *Student Movement* the same fact is emphasized. This makes the full equipment of the men and women who in probably lessened numbers are sent out after the war a burning question for the Church and for the mission boards. In *The East and The West* and also in the *International Review of Missions* there are articles which amount to evidence that America has gone far ahead of us in Great Britain in this respect. We have no parallel to the Kennedy School of Missions at Hartford, nor has the British Board of Study for the Preparation of Missionaries yet laid hold of its great subject, and of the missionary body, as has the parallel Board in America. The broad bearings of this question are indicated in two further papers in the *International*

*Review of Missions*, one—"A Woman of France and A Woman of Scotland" showing the value of moral energy and force of character in the mission field, the other, by Mr. J. H. Harris of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Society, suggesting that some steps should be taken to acquaint intending missionaries with the forms of administration and government in the lands to which they go.

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But after all, the great question concerning the May Meetings is not what we bring to them or learn at them, but what we do after them. Surely, if hearts are not cold, voices are not dumb, ears are not strangely stopped, there is a call in the present situation which demands a response out of all proportion, from the Church and from us as members of it, to anything given before. The closing words of that "Survey of the Year" to which we have already referred come home to our hearts—

"A miracle greater than that which has wrought material deliverance is needed, if the Church, purged from selfishness by the divine fire within her, is to give herself to bring healing and reconciliation to the world.

"God is able to work such a miracle. The cup of unmeasured sacrifice is in His Hand. Many have drunk of it for love of country. Christ drank of it for love of the world. In drinking of it the Church will find a life through which the kingdom of God may come with power."

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