

## The Missionary World.

**H**UMBLE helps are often the most profitable, perhaps because the least expected. Out of a mass of missionary publications of all sorts and kinds, one appearing fortuitously must be selected with gratitude for its message on the eve of 1917. We look for messages in these days; the good news of peace after turmoil, of tranquillity after confusion, of release after arrest is still delayed, and we wait and listen for the slow advent of desires granted. We pick up a little Report—with its characteristically ugly blue cover, its poor paper, its well-worn type and its foreign imprint—and we open it to find that the headline on the first page is “Reasons for Thankfulness.” This is cheering. Still more so is what follows. It is the thirty-first year of work, we are told, and regret is frankly expressed in the opening sentence that the year had been entered upon “with at least a slight feeling of anxiety about the financial outlook.” The second sentence reads, “Our lack of faith has been clearly rebuked, and we can only thank God the more heartily that He has supplied all our financial needs in spite of our unworthiness.” So we learn then from our lowly teacher that it is unworthy to entertain even a “slight feeling of anxiety.” We may be told that the report of the Gifu Church Blind School stands for a very small institution, for an income under three and a half million *yen*, and that it does not compare with the large missionary enterprises on which we are engaged. And that is true in so far as the comparison of size is concerned. But we have to think of the other side of these comparisons and measure the fate of a sparrow against the volume of a heavenly Father’s love. Of the bigger institutions of the mission fields may we not even say, “Ye are of more value than many sparrows”? And even on the threshold of a threatening year are there not reasons for thankfulness beyond any the Church has ever known? We venture to affirm that were any missionary society to set forth its “Reasons for Thankfulness” in the past twelve months the Church would tremble with wonder at the boundless love of God and start forward with high hope into the dim light of the near future.

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We anticipate that the “Missionary Survey of the Year 1916,”

once more promised to us in the January issue of the *International Review of Missions*, will furnish us with overwhelming reasons for thankfulness drawn from wide sources. While the Church bends again to receive the burden of need which must be laid upon her shoulders, let the Church also lift up her face and give praise to God for His incredible goodness in preserving the vitality of the missionary cause and committing it as a trust to His Church for another year. We shall await with deep interest this Survey.

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Among the new missionary assets, as was pointed out recently in these notes, we must reckon the Territorials now in India in their thousands. That men of their intelligence should so unexpectedly have been sent to our great dependency helps us to discern the Hand that over-rules. From all that we can learn, missionary circles in India are alive to the facts of the situation, and notably has the Y.M.C.A. taken the leading part. The desire of the Territorials to understand the conditions and the needs of India is so keen that they have responded with heartiness and even eagerness to avail of all the arrangements made to bring them into touch with missionary work. We are told that the aim has been to return them to England "authorities on missions." Visits to missions have been systematically arranged, in some instances so as to secure that each man in a battalion should see the same mission twice during the winter. Indian hospitality is famous; added to this, lectures are given on India and study circles held, so that on the very spot and in the midst of the subject, India and the Christian Englishman's obligation to the great land can be studied. They have also had the opportunity of meeting Indian Christian leaders. Nor has India, or at least educated India, been blind to the opportunity. With swift discernment the Territorials have been termed "English voters," and effort has been made to acquaint them with Indian conditions. In some instances we learn that our sturdy men were garlanded on arrival, and a desire expressed to see what "best Englishmen" were like. All this is of vital importance. Let us not only think of Territorials as potential missionaries in coming days, let us think of them and pray for them as missionaries now. Who can tell also what the effect will be on our troops in Europe, home-born and from overseas, of the Christian Indian leaders who at the call of the Y.M.C.A. are working in huts and

camps? Prejudice and ignorance must dissolve in [the presence of these men; who are as well able to lead others in Europe as in India.

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We have before us now the Synopsis of Services and Meetings of the Missionary Week, January 22-27. It is a fine programme worthy of a great occasion. An extract from the introduction to the programme should be given here :—

“The aim of this scheme of addresses and discussions is to bring home to awakened consciences the duty of the Church as Witness for Christ to the non-Christian world. . . . In the selection of topics, no attempt has been made to cover the whole ground, either as to countries or questions; but a few large fields and questions of primary importance have been chosen. For the purpose is . . . not a systematic exposition of the vast subject of missions, but an appeal to conscience.”

A right understanding of this aim will save the Week from criticism as to “omitted” countries or creeds. Conscience for Madagascar can be aroused by an appeal for Labrador; ultimately the need is the same, the locality is accidental. We understand that six or seven valuable missionary pamphlets will be published in connexion with this Week. Incidentally we should like to congratulate *India's Women and China's Daughters* (C.E.Z.M.S.) on the successful way in which this Missionary Week is announced in the December number.

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The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, in issuing their Reminder to the clergy and laity of the Church of England about “The National Mission and After,” have, as might be expected, given prominence to foreign missions. After announcing the various Committees of Inquiry to be appointed they state :—

“Again, a necessary result of the prayers and efforts of this year must needs be the quickening of loyalty to the cause of the Kingdom of God throughout the world. But we have not thought it necessary to appoint a special committee on the missionary work of the Church abroad, because it is the special task of the Board of Missions to see that this paramount obligation holds its rightful place in the corporate life of the Church. During the coming year the Board of Missions will present its own plans for following out the Vision and call of the National Mission.”

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Once again we are indebted to the *Chronicle* of the L.M.S. for grouping its chief contents, this time on the general subject of Woman and the World's Future. There is little doubt that a vivid mental impression is conveyed by such a method. The range of missionary subjects is obviously wide, and readers of

missionary magazines are frequently bewildered as they are taken in rapid succession from one subject to another in adjacent columns. It is a relief as well as an education to be allowed to concentrate. To illustrate the point: the *Chronicle* has able papers successively on "What Women are doing in China," "The World's Greatest Effort for Womanhood," "South Sea Sisterhood," "The Martyr's Daughter," "The Power of a Missionary's Wife," "Work amongst Women in the Benares Country District," all admirably illustrated together with an extract from a forthcoming pamphlet by the Misses Gollock on women's work called *Half-Done*. Of course to get this class of treatment in the magazine of a general missionary society must necessarily mean that attention will be directed in a marked degree to the condition of women's missionary work everywhere, and will secure for it something more than the secondary treatment which it has often received. There is no disparity whatever in the treatment of work for men and for women save in the strategical sense. It is here that women's work has too long been allowed to take a secondary place—a fatal mistake for the Church.

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The *H.O.D.* (Home Organization Department) *Magazine* of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society for December is a special number on work among young people. The great value of an occasional use of magazine space in this way is that it brings to the notice of a whole missionary circle special subjects in which but a section are engaged. "Missionary work is in compartments" is a frequent charge brought against the home organization of missions; there is truth in it, but grouping and elucidation such as those just noticed in missionary publications do much to obviate the disadvantages.

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News that persists in penetrating through all barriers confirms in detail the general fears which have haunted us concerning conditions in Syria and Palestine. Among the most complete of these records are two articles which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for July and August, by Alexander Aaronsohn, an American Jew, who was in one of the flourishing Zionist Colonies near Acca at the outbreak of war. In addition to the political value of his story and the interest stirred by his personal hardships—considerably ameliorated at intervals by his command of money—a lurid light is thrown

on the action of the Turkish authorities. The pitiful meaning of "requisitioning" is brought out to the full and the penalties that fall on Jew, Christian and Arab alike. *Daughters of Syria* reprints a statement which has already appeared in *The Scotsman* from a Syrian who succeeded in escaping the vengeance of the Unionists. There is again in these days as in the old slavery times an "Underground" by which those driven desperate by ill-treatment can sometimes make good their escape. It appears that some of these men contrive to get to the coast by night, there embark in any kind of craft they can find, and trust themselves to the perilous sea, hoping to be picked up by some passing vessel. The position in the Lebanon is dark in the extreme, for there Enver Pasha is reported to be fulfilling his threat of starving the inhabitants to death as punishment for their pro-Ally sympathies. But suffering and appalling mortality are not limited to the Lebanon. Beirut, Damascus, Aleppo, Jerusalem are beset with famine, plague, fever and the rapacity of officials. When we turn to *Our Missions*, the Friends' missionary magazine, we find a further confirmation of these reports. In this instance there is, however, a note of hope—but distant hope at best—owing to the proposed formation of the United Relief Fund for Syria and Palestine which Bishop MacInnes has instituted in conjunction with the missionary societies.

"We know little from exact information of the actual conditions [of members of the Friends' mission], and may perhaps believe that the level to which they have been lifted by the work of some of our missionaries may, to some extent, have raised them above the worst of the misery and destitution which are reported as having befallen the Syrian people generally. But, beyond question, they are needing our constant sympathetic support; and before long we may hope to be in a position to do something to relieve their urgent bodily needs, and to comfort them in the unspeakable sorrows they have been called to pass through. Steady progress is being made in the organization of the United Relief Fund for Syria and Palestine, introduced in our columns recently by Bishop MacInnes of Jerusalem; and we hope that its claims will not be overlooked by Friends amidst all other calls for help."

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