

and the extension of our operations among the heathen has been very marked. Our colleges are greatly improved in equipment. Our ministers are more adequately supported. Our funds for aged and infirm ministers and widows and orphans are stronger. Indeed, every department of the work of the Church shows steady and healthy growth. As regards the spiritual work of the Church, the progress of vital religion in our congregations, we think we are justified, by the Assembly's report and by the tidings reaching us almost daily, in rendering thanks to the God of all grace for more than usual prosperity.

Our people may well rejoice that the Church is thus fulfilling her glorious mission. She testifies for Christ; she does Christ's work in a world once trodden by His sacred feet and purchased by His blood. And now that we have fairly entered on a new "Assembly year," we may well bear in mind that there is to be no slackening of effort, no slumbering at our post, but rather an increase of zeal, of love, of liberality, of self-sacrifice—a patient continuance in well-doing "till He cometh."

Missionary Cabinet.

FRANCIS XAVIER.

IF, in the meantime, we pass over a number of centuries, it is not because there was a dearth of missionaries in the interval. God has never left Himself without a witness on this earth. From the time of the Apostles until now, in every, even the darkest ages of the Church, there have never been wanting faithful and fearless missionaries who were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, nor afraid to die for it—men like Adelbert, the first missionary martyr of Prussia, who fell on the 23rd of April, 997, praying for his murderers; and, a hundred years later, the saintly Otto, the apostle of Pomerania; and Francis of Assisi, who converted an army of monks into missionaries, reserving for himself the evangelization of Moslem hosts, and who finished his magnificent course in 1226; and Raymond Lull, the philosopher and philanthropist *par excellence* of his day, who in 1315 was stoned to death by the Moors of Africa in the 80th year of his age. These, and many others that might be named, all witnessed a good

confession, but we cannot speak particularly of them just now.

FRANCIS XAVIER, "the Apostle of the Indies," as he has, though not with strict propriety, been called, was one of the noblest and most gifted missionaries of the sixteenth century. Roman Catholic though he was, we might say, without fear of contradiction, that a more devoted missionary of the Cross never lived. Born of a noble Spanish family at the ancestral castle of Xavière, in Navarre, on the 7th of April, 1506, he was reared in the lap of luxury. His elder brothers were trained to arms, but Francis, the youngest of a large family, was destined for higher service. He early evinced a taste for study, and was sent to the University of Paris at the age of seventeen. He was a brilliant scholar, and it was not long before he made his mark as a distinguished professor of philosophy, whose lectures attracted not only the *élite* of Parisian society but admiring crowds from all parts of the country. While residing in Paris, he made the acquaintance of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of "the Society of Jesus," commonly called the *Jesuits*, a society originally devoted "to the education of youth, the renovation of the Catholic Church, and the conversion of the heathen." Xavier soon came under the spell of Loyola's influence and became fired with his missionary zeal. He joined him in Rome, and assisted him in his enterprise of organizing a band of devoted men for the service of the Church. While thus employed, the King of Portugal made application to the Pope for missionaries to go and preach the Gospel to his distant colonies in India. Xavier had intended going to Palestine, to establish a mission there, but he readily fell in with this new proposal and threw himself into it with all the enthusiasm of his ardent nature. To the remonstrance of his friends, who warned him that he would certainly lose his life if he went to heathen lands, Xavier replied with true magnanimity, "That is an honour to which such a sinner as I am may not aspire; but this I will say, that whatever form of torture or death awaits me, I am ready to suffer it ten thousand times for the salvation of a single soul." In 1541, with solemn consecration to the cause he had espoused, he sailed from Lisbon for Goa, on the west coast of India, in company with the King's