

ably felt at the serious delay that must necessarily occur both as to the establishment and the operation of the mission, until so indispensable a basis to missionary endeavour could be supplied. The commissioner now recited the incident of the Pashtoo Bible of Ali Khan. Renewed and urgent applications were now made to the Serampoor press, whence, however, they only received for answer, that after strictest search in the existing stock, and diligent reference to the records of the books that had issued from their press, they are able to say that they had never published a Pashtoo Bible. The Commissioner being well persuaded of the inaccuracy of this reply, now made application to the Shoikh Ali Khan, offering him a splendid copy of the Bible in the Persian, if he would give up the Pashtoo copy; at the same time representing, that as the words of the gentleman were realized, scruples were needless. The Sheikh assented, and accepted the equivalent, which however he did not live to treasure, as he died the day before its arrival: so thoroughly did everything connected with the Peshawar Mission appear to be the result of Providential interference. The Pashtoo Bible was received at Peshawar, and found, as the Commissioner had said, to have been printed at Serampoor, whither it was now sent to be re-issued, no longer for a probable service among Afghan tribes, but for the actual dawn of a coming day, through the instrumentality of a Mission already established. Certain portions have recently appeared, and the promise of light shining in the darkness opens upon the heathen land.

"Providence in thus so singularly maturing circumstances for the development of Christianity among the Moslems of Peshawar, is accomplishing the purpose for which His word is given. Moreover, His favor is now fostering the Mission in its actual progress, through the instrumentality of such men as Dr. Pfander, who to large experience in Eastern Missions, adds large acquaintance with the Mahometan superstitions and great powers of argumentative controversy; Mr. Clark, of Trinity College, Cambridge, who brings to the work not only the freshness of early life, but great zeal and sincerity; and lastly, Major Martin, who, earnest as Cornelius of old, has abandoned the army and given himself as a lay brother to the success of that cause of which he may be said to have been the original mover, if, as is supposed, he be the anonymous donor of the 10,000 rupees. At the same time, the Commissioner lends himself nobly to the work: so that, this distinguished post and earnestness in the cause considered, the most violent fanatics

of the place have not only not opposed, but have lent themselves to the intention of the Missions. Dr. Pfander and his family, on their arrival, were located for the time being in the Commissioner's residence. Thus also the officers of that large station have come forward with something more than words. So that we may look to Peshawar as a land of large promise; and if it be true that these unruly children and warlike hordes are, as believed by many, the descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel, it may be that "the Kings of the East" may issue hence to their own glorious land, bearing with them the light which British missionary labors has assisted to shed upon their benighted minds. And whilst we are obliged to deplore the lack of fruit, in the languishing and deadness which rests on so many missions, we are able to thank God and take courage at the unfolding promise here.

CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The Annual Meeting of this Society was held in Exeter hall on Tuesday, the 6th inst., the Earl of Chichester in the chair, supported by the Earl of Shaftesbury, Viscount Middleton, and numerous other friends of the Society. The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said that it was encouraging to know that, notwithstanding the increased amount of taxation on account of the war, the subscriptions to the Society had not fallen off; but had been larger, he believed, than on any former occasion. It appeared from the report, which was read by the Rev. J. Venn, that the amount received for the general fund, including the China Fund, was £112,379. A special donation to the Sierra Leone Female Institution of £1000 had also been received; and the subscriptions to the Fund for Disabled Missionaries, &c., amounted to £1829, making a total of £115,208, received in the United Kingdom, which was £7865 in advance of last year, and nearly £2000 more than the income of any previous year. The general expenses of the Society at home and abroad were £109,789, and £5291 had been expended on account of disabled missionaries, &c.; total expenditure, £115,080. The excess of expenditure over income in the past year was £872; in the previous year, £5621; making a total excess in the two years of £6493, which had been borrowed from the capital fund. The account of local funds raised in the missions and expended upon the operations of the Society had not yet been received. The Society had now 128 stations, and engaged 119 English clergymen, 54 foreigners, 80 natives and East Indians, 33 European laymen, schoolmasters, lay

agents, printers, &c.; 9 European female teachers (exclusive of missionaries' wives), and 1716 native and country-born catechists and teachers of all classes. The number of communicants was 18,739.

PEWS—THEIR HISTORY.

In Anglo-Saxon and some Norman churches of early date, a stone bench was made to project within the wall running round the whole interior except the east end.

In 1319 they are represented as sitting on the ground, or standing. About this time the people introduced low, rude, three-legged stools promiscuously over the church.

Wooden seats were introduced soon after the Norman conquest. In 1287 a decree was issued in regard to the wrangling for seats so common that none should call any seat in church his own, except noblemen and patrons, each entering and holding the one he first entered.

As we approach the Reformation, from 1530 to 1540, seats were more appropriated, the entrance being guarded by the cross bars and the initial letters engraved on them.

Immediately after the reformation the pew system prevailed, as we learn from a complaint the poor Commons addressed to Henry VIII, 1546, in reference to his decree that a Bible should be in every church at liberty for all to read, because they feared it might be taken into the "quyre" or some "pue." In 1608 galleries were introduced.

As early as 1611, pews were arranged to afford comfort by being baized or cushioned, while the sides around were so high as to hide those within—(a device of the puritans to avoid being seen by the officers who reported those who did not stand when the name of Jesus was mentioned.) The services were often greatly protracted, so that many would fall asleep. Hence Swift's pithy allusion:

"A bedstead of antique mode,
Compact of timber many a load,
Such as our ancestors did use,
Was metamorphosed into pews;
Which still their ancient nature keep
By lodging folks disposed to sleep."

With the reign of Charles I. the reason for the heightening of the sides disappeared; and from the civil war they declined gradually to their present height.

Compiled from the Eclectic Museum for 1853, by W. W. M.

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