

## THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

BY JENNIE F. WILLING.

Of all the encouraging signs of the times, none gives better cheer than the advance movement of the missionary cause. Never before was so much money given for the evangelization of the heathen. Never before were there so many men and women ready to go as missionaries to foreign fields. This indicates a healthful religious life ; for the measure of the aggressive zeal of the Church is the exact measure of its vitality.

Can there be a better investment of prayer and eloquence than in instructing the Church in its duty to the heathen ? Selfishness is the bane of our piety. Missionary zeal is one of the Lord's antidotes. They are the noblest evangelists who take our thought off ourselves (when once our case is placed in Christ's hands, by our consecration and trust), and set us caring for the salvation of others. We cannot pray or work for people of whose need we do not know. The men and women who will instruct us about those for whom God holds us responsible, are doing us a rare service. The Saviour was indignant with those who could discern the face of the sky, but who would not discern the signs of the times, indicating so plainly that his kingdom was at hand. He intimated that theirs was a moral obtuseness ; for he called them "hypocrites." Let us not fall into like condemnation. Let us not fail to recognize the agency God is using.

A great force has been evolved during the last generation. According to the old German myth, it was the kiss of a warlike prince that wakened the Sleeping Beauty. This new power has been called into action by the rough lip of war. The women of the land learned from their Sanitary and Christian Commission efforts that they could do strong work, and carry heavy interests, and yet be all the better fitted for their blessed, beautiful home life. The nation, in its sore need, was glad to waive its centuries-old veto, and say, "Amen." The world recognizes this force, and is ready to make use of it. It is opening the industries, trades, business and professions to women. The flesh and the devil are not one whit behind. They are grasping for their full share of this power. Shall the Church fail to make way for it in God's work ? Providence says, "No." This Woman's Missionary Society is a sluice through which this power shall be turned on the ma-

chinery of evangelism. We are beginning to apprehend the meaning of that word of Paul, "In Christ there is neither male nor female." Unless we greatly mistake the signs of the times, God is bringing into His own service this reserve force—the energies and efficiencies of women. So we need not worry about the success of this Society. The only danger is, that the women of the Church will fail to hear God's voice and come up to his help. If they will but respond to His call, He will carry their burdens and lead them to sure victory.

Like all attempts at reform, it cannot last if it depends mainly upon the enthusiasm of the few. Antæus renewed his strength only when he touched his mother, the Earth. No cause can prosper without the sympathy of the common people.

Women are more largely responsible for public sentiment than men are. You may commit a man to a reform ; but unless you convert his wife, sooner or later, she will outwit you, and turn him back to his old selfishness. As mothers, women wield unlimited power. As a compensation for the risks and sorrows of maternity, God has put into their hands a sceptre such as no monarch ever held. Their words and thoughts crystallize in the lives of those who come after them. They have the heart all to themselves, when it is new and fresh, and when every touch will last to the end. Others may write their maxims over what the mother has traced, but, like the first writing upon the palimpsest, hers will last long after theirs is faded and worn away. Her hand shapes the life.

So I say, this missionary revival must fail of permanence, unless the women are aroused to use their power upon public sentiment in its behalf. How can this be done ? A vital question—one upon which hinges the salvation of many people. Let us try to answer it. There must be ample instruction about the needs of the heathen. It is a short road to a woman's heart. She has a discipline in the sick-room, by the cradle's side, and at the dying bed, that makes her sensibilities warm and quick. She is not indifferent to Christ's claims. Two women respond to his call, where one man heeds him. Women must be religious. Many have their heart's love tangled about those who wander in sins and dangers to the world's