

THE ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MIDLAND DISTRICT BRANCH, OF THE DIOCESIAN CHURCH SOCIETY, 1856-7.

At the close of another year in the history of this Society, the Committee proceeds as usual to lay before its members, a statement of its exertions during the year, of the wants of the Church within the field of its operations, of the encouragements which it has received, and of the prospects of usefulness which present themselves. In hastily glancing at these matters, many things will probably appear of a discouraging character, if not as a just cause of self-reproach; while others again may justly be viewed as a subject of congratulation and hope, and as well calculated to revive the fainting heart, and stimulate to uncommon and untiring exertions in future in the cause of Christ.

The lesson which the Church of England in this Province has been very slow to learn, "not to put her trust in Princes," she has at length mastered under the Discipline of severe affliction, and the Teaching of bitter experience. If, however, she, as a church, and her members, as individuals, in the midst of these trials, have also learned first to put their trust in the living God, and next in her scriptural truth and Divine principles, vitally believed and energetically practiced, it is worth to her far more than her rich endowment, infinitely more than the thousands of acres, or the thousands of pounds sterling which she has lost.

The destitution which exists within the sphere of the operations of this Branch, is not only painful to contemplate, but it is actually increasing from year to year. Like an insidious foe it seems gradually approaching our centres of strength. This vast district is already divided into twenty-one Townships, each about ten miles square, comprehending an area of 2,600 square miles. In the rear of these, lies a large territory, now sparsely inhabited, but which, under arrangements already completed, will in a few years be filled with a busy population. Throughout this immense field, Kingston and its suburbs alone excepted, there are only four clergymen of the Church of England. Five of the Townships in the District are thus partially supplied, while 15 out of 21 townships, and all its unsurveyed lands, are now without a single Missionary of the Church of England!

The population in this District amounts at the present time probably to nearly 60,000 souls. At the last census the numbers of the Church of England within its bounds numbered 13,756. From the table No. 7, Appendix, "Shewing the state of religion in general in these United Counties," two facts are evident; first, that the Church of England constitutes one-fourth of the entire population within their limits, and ought, therefore, to have greater vigor and ability for self-support and extension, than any other christian community. The next fact is of a painful and