

THE LARGEST OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETIES.

Modern Protestant Missions are about a century old. In this hundred years over one hundred societies have been organized and are now carrying on work among the heathen.

THE LARGEST OF THESE

is the Church Missionary Society. It was formed in the first year of the present century.

Before this time there had existed in the Church of England two societies which had for their object the spread of the Gospel in foreign lands. One of these was the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the other was the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Both of these societies, however, had confined themselves chiefly to foreign parts where Christianity was already planted.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had received its charter from William III, in 1701, and in the charter its two great objects were stated as being, "to provide for the ministrations of the Church of England in the British Colonies, and to propagate the Gospel among the native inhabitants of those countries." The principal efforts of the Society, however, had been directed to the British colonists, rather than to the conversion of the heathen, and the Society had more the character of a Home than a Foreign Missionary enterprise.

It seemed, therefore, that there was need for another society which should consider the heathen as its principal care, and so the Church Missionary Society was organized. Since the beginning of the present century the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel has enlarged its work among the heathen, and is now regarded as a Foreign Missionary Society. It receives in general the gifts of the High church people in the Church of England; the Church Missionary Society has in general the support of the Low Church or Evangelical party.

The original design of the Church Missionary Society was to send the Gospel to the heathen in Africa and the East. Its chartered title is, "The Church Missionary Society for Africa and the east." But it has extended its operations far beyond these bounds. It has missions not only in

Africa, Egypt, Palestine, Persia, Arabia, India, Ceylon, and Mauritius, but also in China, Japan, New Zealand, North West America and the Islands of the North Pacific.

At first the Society was like the grain of mustard seed. Its average annual receipts for the year were but \$1,600. It has now grown to a great tree. The total receipts for the year ending March 31st, 1888, were \$1,100,000. Its missionaries occupy 266 stations. Its staff of European workers comprises 262 clergymen and 65 laymen and female teachers. The native helpers in its employ number 280 clergymen, 3,660 laymen and female teachers. In the native churches under its care there are 47,300 communicants. It has 1,937 missionary schools, in which are about 77,000 scholars.

The church of England, as all know, has within its communion immense wealth and many high titles. Yet, it is not to the rich and the noble the Church Missionary Society is indebted for its support. The backbone of the Society, to quote the language recently used by its chief organ, is "the mass of what may be termed relatively the inferior clergy, the middle class gentry, farmers, and others in a similar category." "Throughout its existence the Church Missionary Society has been upheld and carried forward by the warm and earnest sympathy of the evangelical clergy and laity, who have found in it a medium corresponding to the profound convictions and earnest desire of their souls, the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ in its purity, in its fullness, and its simplicity. Our readers may recall a statement by the Bishop of Rochester—a melancholy fact he termed it—which went the round of our church papers not long ago. He declared that out of the million and more of dollars subscribed to the Society, not more than five thousand dollars had been contributed by persons with titles to their names. This is not because the aristocracy of England have not been appealed to; but they are deaf to the appeal.—*Scl.*

Little by little, sure and slow,
We fashion our future of bliss or woe.

As the present passes away.
Our feet are climbing the stairway bright,
Up to the region of endless light,
Or gliding downward into the night,
Little by little, and day by day.