

## ADDRESS.

Of the President, Mrs. M. A. Castle, at the Opening of the Annual Meeting of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society of Ontario.

With the fresh inspiration of last evening's greetings in our souls, we may most heartily say, it is good to be here. Allow me this morning to re-echo "welcome" to every woman from every branch of our society. We all in our homes and circles, in various parts of the country, have been seeking to save the lost in heathen lands. Our faces have been turned to the same suffering East, our hearts have heard the same cry, "come over and help us," and together our hands have striven to help, and so in our separation we have not been separated. Invisible though palpable as the electric wires that thread the upper air of our cities, have been running cords of sympathy from circle to circle, from heart to heart, "through the intermediate spaces," but to-day the lines converge, bringing us all to the head office. It has been asked, why hold an annual meeting? Costing money, time and strength, does it pay? In the fresh memory of the programme anxiety, and considering also the domestic disarrangement that a sudden inflow of delegates may cause in our homes, we answer most emphatically yes, it pays. It is to be hoped the Hamilton ladies will be able from their hearts to verify this statement at the close, as they so kindly and generously have at the beginning of these meetings.

We live and work during the year as parts, none large, but some, perhaps, feeling themselves too small to live. But come to the annual meeting, and as the little finger is essential to the completeness of the human frame, so the smallest circle, if it has but two members finds itself with the others, important to the wholeness of the society, and may really be the largest in faith and generosity. Yes, periodical, representative meetings are essential to the progress of a society. They strengthen, stimulate, fraternize. We are one in separation, but it is much more manifest when we can look into one another's faces. Change as usual, has been busy with us. Anniversaries come one after another, our work goes on, at home and abroad, but the workers change. We miss to-day the cheery face of Mrs. Rose, who was for many years the beloved and efficient Secretary of this society. Her presence and words were always an inspiration, and we trust they will be to others in her new and distant home.

In her place we are glad to welcome Miss Buchan who bids fair to perpetuate the zeal and integrity of a father, whose name for many a year, was a synonym for Foreign Missions.

So far as we know, death has not bereaved us of any of our home workers, but on the Foreign field another has fallen. As an account of this sad event comes under the head of Foreign Reports, we may only say, that the loss of Mr. Currie to the Mission, can be somewhat estimated by his readiness to grasp the standard laid down last year by our beloved Timpany, when to do it was not only at the risk of his frail life, but was also a separation from those who were dearer than life.

"Type of the heart direct that sped along  
Swiftly where duty led, and did not sorrow  
For count of odds, or dread of earthly loss  
Buoyed with the costliest strength to bear the heaviest cross."

But great as this loss is to the mission, how can it be compared to hers who widowed, sits alone? To her we offer our sincere sympathies, for her, our earnest prayers.

As your almshouse the Board feel deeply their responsibility, both to each member of the society, and to the Master whose stewards we all are, knowing full well "that we shall be inquired of," whether with these pounds entrusted to us, we have gained other pounds. The secretaries will inform you concerning our stewardship. I may mention however, that, in addition to our regular work, we started the year with great expectations. We planned vigorously to go forward, but for at least two-thirds of the year our purposes were thwarted, and we could only sit in the gloom of perplexity and wait. A butler who was ordered by his master to stand in the hall and wait for orders, was accosted by his mistress who supposed him to be idling, with "James, what are you doing?" to which he replied, "I am busy waiting, mum," and if "they also serve, who only stand and wait," your Board has served you well. A lady came to me in the last of the summer to ask what was being done about our new plans. I replied, nothing, we are waiting. Now we see that all the while God's purposes were ripening, and to-day we come in the fruition of a great hope that crowns the year with joy.

One year ago as Miss Hatch stood before this society reading a paper on Home Missions, we thought what a Foreign Missionary she would make, and to our surprise within two months from that time we learned that she intended to offer herself to the Board to be sent to India. This she did in the spring, and was accepted, but some word from our missionaries led her to withdraw her application, but again word came asking for her to be sent immediately, and now we have the joy of announcing that she whom our heart's desired, and whom we believe the Lord has chosen, is on her way to India: God speed the ship, and protect it all her journey through.

She goes as a teacher, both skilled and consecrated, and it is safe to say that there is no department of work just now in our mission, more important than the schools, for without doubt native preaching and teaching are the hope of the future for the trying climates of the distant East. Let us make emphatic the school work.

But while we are glad and grateful to-day for our new-missionary, and for the general increase in the work, which is almost a marvel in our eyes, saith the Master of each one of us, "She hath done what she could?" We make no doubt that there are women in Ontario and in all parts of our land, who have given to their utmost of time, money and prayer to this supreme cause of missions; but they are few when we consider no amount large that is not sacrificial, and, we may add, how small that is. The costliest gift on record was only two mites; but it was all her living, who gave it. The silken-robed self-satisfied givers of silver shekels may have scorned the widowed-garments and the trifling coins, the Tabernacle treasurer counted the offering as a very little thing, but the keeper of the heavenly treasury numbered it as "more than they all." His hooks are kept on a sacrificial and not on a cash bases, from which scrutinizing law there is no appeal. "I will give my mite," has scotched into slumberous ease, many a wearer of purple and fine linen," but the day will come when such values will change.

The modern establishment of equal giving in many societies, and in woman's mission societies in particular, is mite-giving in its legitimate sense, and while it has worked admirably and brought great gain to the treasuries, and opened the flood-gates of universal benevolence by bringing down the maximum, to the scantiest capacity, and making the humblest feel the dignity of giving on equal terms with the more affluent, it is nevertheless not equal giving, nor scriptural. It was a means to an end. But not the end. "As the Lord hath prospered