

all our stations supplied as fully as in the summer. This, of course, will need additional funds, as the amount required to supply stations for twelve months will be nearly double that required for six; but the mission stations will, with constant supply, advance much quicker to the position of self-sustaining congregations than they can do at present. If we are to maintain our position in the North-West and British Columbia this is absolutely necessary, for the present arrangement of six months' supply simply leaves hundreds of mission stations to be occupied by other Churches during the winter months. Ontario, in past years, has suffered very much from this same cause, but the error is not likely to be repeated in the North-West Territories. A generous legacy, left by one of the wealthy members of our Church, will enable Manitoba College to erect additional buildings, with the assistance of other friends in Canada, but the large emigration promised from Great Britain during the present year demands a large increase in our funds. Unless, indeed, the Churches in Scotland and Ireland come to our help, it is impossible to carry on the work that we are engaged in. The work is as much that of the Home Church as the Canadian Church, for the thousands of Presbyterian emigrants daily coming to the North-West Territories, if not followed up by the Gospel, are certain to lapse into indifference and infidelity. While exceedingly grateful, therefore, for what the Home Churches have done, and for the able young ministers they send us from time to time, we seek larger assistance to enable us to do greater things in the future."

A proposal on the part of our Government to lend £150,000 for promoting Crofter Emigration to British Columbia suggested a great quickening to our interest in that district, but in the meantime the proposal has come to nothing. Since this was written the arrangement referred to above has been carried out.

IRELAND AND FOREIGN MISSIONS—THE STORY OF TWO OLD MINUTE BOOKS.

The writer has in his possession two curious old manuscript books which throw light on the beginnings of the foreign mission movement in Ireland. The first bears on its cover in gilt letters the words, "Down Missionary Society." "In the summer of 1812," so the record begins, "Rev. Alexander Waugh, deputed from the London Missionary Society of London, attended the Synods of Ulster and of Ireland (i. e., the Secession Synod) and solicited their countenance and support in propagating the Gospel among the heathen." Both Synods responded to Mr. Waugh's appeals. The members of the Presbytery of Down were greatly stirred by them, and after much deliberation they addressed a letter on April 1st, 1813, to the clergy of the then Established Church and of other denominations. In this letter they tell how the London Missionary Society had been working for seventeen years in spreading the Gospel, and that "their happy success in some of the most uncivilized and darkest parts of the earth furnishes rational evidences of Divine approbation." The letter goes on to say that a branch of the Society "was last summer instituted in the city of Dublin," and asks the ministers to whom it was addressed to attend a meeting on the 29th inst., in the parish church of Ballynahinch. It concludes with these words: "The precepts, 'Go and teach all nations,' 'Preach the Gospel to every creature,' the promise, 'Lo, I am with you to the end of the world,' the superiority of Christianity to idolatry and civilization to the degraded state of the savage; the honour of God; and the promotion of the present and future happiness of our fellow-men of every colour and clime, will, we trust, urge your attendance at the meeting, and procure your aid to the good cause in which the Christian missionary is embarked."

On July 13th, 1813, "a respectable number of clergy and others met in the parish church of Ballynahinch," and formed the Down Auxiliary Missionary Society. A subscription list was opened, "and a number of gentlemen were pleased to subscribe for this year the sum annexed to their respective names." Then follow subscriptions amounting to £32 10½d. At the end of the first year it was reported that subscriptions, donations, and congregational collections had been received to the amount of £167 17s. 8½d., and after paying all expenses the treasurer was able to remit to London £160 5s. 3d. British money. Among the expenses is mentioned the sum of 1s. 10d., being the postage of a letter from Joseph Hardcastle, Esq. Evidently the days of penny postage were still far off. Meetings of this Down Missionary Society were held at stated intervals, two or more in the year, and in various parts of the county, and the proceedings seem to have been always opened with a missionary sermon. Vigorous efforts were made to awaken the interest of ministers and people in the work of missions. In a circular letter addressed to ministers on August 2nd, 1815, we find these words: "The Society invite and would fondly constrain you, rev. sir, to come to their meetings at the time specified, to favour them with your presence and counsel in support of the difficult, the humane, the honourable, and glorious work of extending the Christianity and civilization of the British Empire to the ignorant and wild savages of Africa, to the American Indian, and to the blinded and superstitious pagans of Asia."

There is an entry in this book which recalls exciting days in the history of missions to India. On August 31st, 1813, we find it recorded that the thanks of the Society are pre-eminently due "to Viscount Castlereagh, our representative in Parliament, for his steady support of the clause introduced by his lordship into the Indian Bill in favour of promulgating

Christianity in India." It was in that year, as the readers of this *Review* doubtless remember, that the charter of the East India Company was renewed by the Parliament of England, and the restriction removed which had hitherto hindered all mission effort in British India. William Wilberforce was one of the leaders in agitating and arguing for this change. He declared that it was the foulest blot on the moral character of Englishmen, next to the slave trade, "to allow our fellow-subjects in the East Indies to remain, without any effort on our part to enlighten and reform them, under the grossest, the darkest, and most depraving system of idolatrous superstition that almost ever existed on earth." As the night of the final decision in the House of Commons came on there was much anxiety as to the result throughout all the Churches, and much prayer was offered up to God. Wilberforce wrote: "I have heard that many good men were praying for us all night." That night the prayer of the Churches—and in their prayers, as the above extract proves, Ulster had its share—was answered and British India was thrown open to the heralds of the Cross.

The last meeting of the Down Missionary Society this minute-book records was on Oct. 11, 1821. It would seem that by this time County Down did not stand alone in its organization and efforts for the mission cause. "The Society agreed for the present not to write a circular, as had been intended, but were of opinion that a preferable expedient would be to have a general meeting in Belfast, on the second Tuesday in June, of the missionary societies of Antrim, Armagh, Tyrone and Down." The object of this meeting was to be, "to make the proceedings and success of the London Missionary Society better known, and to select a number of ministers as itinerants, who should immediately go forth and plead the cause of missions to the heathen through the several counties of the Province of Ulster." The last sentence in the book tells us that this meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. Mr. Cooke, who in after days was known far and near as Rev. Henry Cooke, D.D., LL.D., a man famous in many ways, and whose statue now stands in one of the most prominent places in Belfast, but known and honoured in the Churches chiefly as the great defender of orthodox truth against Arrian error.

That old book with its simple records, written in faded ink, is a voice for the past which must deeply move every Christian heart. It speaks of the great awakening of the Church of God to a long neglected duty, which the opening years of this century saw, and it testifies that in this widespread awakening the Church of Christ in Ireland had a share. We almost seem, as we read it, to see the Spirit of God brooding on the waters, and new life appearing beneath His Almighty touch.

The other old book is a record of the early days of the foreign mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in the handwriting of its first Convener, Rev. James Morgan, D.D., Belfast. In 1840 the two Synods already referred to—the Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod—were united and became the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The tide of spiritual life had been steadily rising for many years, and manifested itself not only in this happy union at home, but in the beginning of independent mission work abroad. The year of the union (the jubilee of which was celebrated in an appropriate manner in 1890) was the year of the formation of the General Assembly's foreign mission, and at the first meeting of the Assembly the first two missionaries were set apart for India.

It is recorded in the book how these missionaries were chosen, and the plan adopted then might be still followed with good results. "But where are the missionaries? How shall these be had? Your directors were instructed to seek for them; and it may be important to say how we proceeded. We had before us a list of all the ministers of the Church, and selected twenty whom we considered to be men suited to the work. To these we addressed letters suggesting to them the duty of becoming missionaries to the heathen, and desire to know what might be their own views and feelings upon the subject. Six of the brethren left themselves entirely at our disposal. After the most solemn deliberation and prayer we made choice of two out of that number, and recommended to the Synod to send them forth." "It will thus be seen that, in selecting our missionaries, we have proceeded on the principle that *all the ministers of the Church are the servants of the body, and are bound to labour wherever the Church may think proper to send them.* (The italics are mine.) We have selected two of our most approved brethren, men beloved and useful in their parishes, fit for labour in any locality, and richly endowed with gifts and graces."

Dr. Morgan goes on to tell how the money to send them forth was obtained. "On the day of the appointment of the missionaries there were no funds in readiness to send them forth. We had reckoned that if God gave us men He would soon give us money; and our faith was not exercised in vain. A subscription was set on foot in the Assembly, and the members contributed about £500. An appeal was made to the congregations in Belfast, which produced about £600. Several congregations in the county sent forward contributions of their own accord. Our Secession brethren had a little stock of near £200, which they cast into the common treasury, and thus in two months there were raised about £1,500 to commence our missionary enterprise."

Great enthusiasm seems to have been evoked, in Belfast especially, by this opening of foreign mission work. When the night came for the missionaries to sail, the cabin of the steamer was granted to them and their friends for a special prayer-meeting. The 20th of Acts was read, and prayer was offered to Him who rules the winds and waves, consigning the brethren and their wives to His divine protection. "Never shall I forget that scene," writes one who was present. "I believe there was not one in that cabin during Dr. Cooke's beautiful prayer who did not shed tears; nay, I have heard it said since, by some gentlemen who were there, that they thought before this that there was no earthly circumstance could make them weep, and yet they found they were unable to restrain their tears." "The commencement," writes Dr. Morgan, "of the foreign mission forms an era in the history of the Church which, it is hoped, will hereafter be found to have been the dawn of a bright and glorious day."

Pasted into this old minute-book is a poem, written by a well-known Belfast poet of the time, and adorned with handsome silhouettes of the two missionaries and their wives. Two verses of this poem may be quoted here—

"Our fathers heard the heathen's cry,
But alas! no helping hand was nigh;
Our fathers prayed and the dawn of day
New brightly shines on their children's way
At the call of the Church, the nobly brave
Smile at the dangers of ocean wave,
That Zion's banners may be unfurled
On the shores of a far-off heathen world!"

"Away, away, o'er the deep blue sea,
May the winds of heaven propitious be!
Brethren await you on India's strand,
Ready to greet you with heart and hand:
Wilson will train your hands for war,
And the mind of Duff, like an Eastern star,
Shall shine on your path, amidst heathen night,
With the splendid blaze of a comet's light."

The difficulties which the first missionaries to Gujarat and Kathiawar encountered were very great. It is curious to note how long the journey lasted. They sailed from Liverpool on September 4th, 1840, and did not arrive in Bombay till February 26th, 1841. It was hard to get suitable houses, and the missionaries and their wives had to suffer much privation. The infant child of Dr. Glasgow died the June after they landed, and in August Mr. Kerr, the other of the two missionaries, was suddenly taken away; but, as usual, difficulties and losses only evoked enthusiasm and prayer. "This is an event," wrote the Convener to the members of the Church, "that has not been lightly permitted. There is good reason to justify it. Even we can see that many important ends are served by it. How it demonstrates the reality of religion when the fear of death does not deter from its service! Our friend might, and no doubt would, have been useful, had he been spared, in a lengthened ministry at home; but I have no hesitation in saying he has accomplished more by his death than he could have effected by the longest ministry at home. What benefits he has already conferred on the whole Church, in the example he has set, the spirit he has excited, and the labours he has prompted! Our short mission has already been to our Church as life from the dead."

The book goes on to record that on January 12th, 1842, four missionaries were publicly set apart to the work in India. Two of them with their wives sailed at once from Southampton to Alexandria. It is mentioned that "the directors of the Oriental steamers have kindly granted one passage free to Alexandria;" that a free passage was granted to all of them from Belfast to Liverpool, and that the railway company gave them free passes from Birmingham to London. On May 16th, 1843, came the tidings of the first conversion, that of Abdul Rahman, a Mussulman and a Munshi, who still lives and has been a consistent Christian and most useful worker during all these years. To-day the mission, the story of the beginning of which this old book records, has seven central stations and is opening an eighth in Kathiawar, and Gujarat; the Christian community it has gathered out of heathenism numbers more than 2,000; it employs above 100 native evangelists and teachers, and it has 3,500 scholars in its schools.

There is a sweetness and a fragrance about this old book and the records it contains. The hand that penned them and led the Church in its early missionary efforts, and which has long since crumbled into dust, was the hand of a man of God, and a spirit of faith and prayer breathes through every page. The best men in the Church were sought out as the first missionaries, and cheerfully obeyed the call. The difficulties that faced the early workers drove them back on God, and when reported to the Church at home stirred up the people to more prayer and sympathy and generous giving. Work thus begun—and it is thus that most of our great missionary enterprises have had their beginning—must go on and prosper. As Dr. Morgan said in one of his early circulars, "Our little hour will soon be gone, but our work will survive us. When we are cold in the grave, the principles we have disseminated will warm the heart of the living; and then the work will be progressive. Our mission will be the parent of many." We should honour the self-sacrifice, and energy, and holy zeal of these men and women of a past generation, who laid so firmly and so well the foundation of the great foreign mission enterprise, shrinking not from the greatness and the difficulty of the task, and the fruit of whose life and labours we are reaping abundantly in the ever-increasing missionary enthusiasm of to-day.—Rev. William Park, D.D., Convener of Foreign Missions, Belfast, Ireland, in *Missionary Review*.

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