

The Forward Movement for Missions

At the Cannington District Convention, recently held at Little Britain, Miss Mildred F. Davey, Victoria Road, gave an excellent address, from which the following is an extract, giving information of value to all our Leagues:

In the year 1889 the Epworth League was organized. At the end of six years, although it marshalled 75,000 young people, it had not discovered an objective great enough to arouse them to heroic action.

"While the Epworth League had been organizing the young people the Student Missionary Volunteer Movement, beginning in 1886, had been conducting a campaign for volunteers for the foreign field among the students in the colleges of North America, with the result that the Mission Boards had more men and women offering for service than could be supported.

The Methodist students in Canada naturally applied to their own Mission Board. Although the work was in urgent need of men, and the Board was anxious to accept the volunteers, it was with great reluctance and sorrow that it was compelled, for lack of funds to refuse many who applied.

"During the quadrennium of 1892-1896 (immediately preceding the organization of the Forward Movement) the missionary income from subscriptions and collections showed a decrease of \$20,000 or ten per cent. Such were the conditions, when in 1895 the plan of using the college students, in developing the young people, so that they might become a missionary force, was presented to the college men. All agreed that the problem of more men and money would be solved if the young people could be interested in the great work of the evangelization of the world. The students were organized and a missionary campaign was begun. During the first summer months thousands of young people were pledged to pray, study and give, and the support of more than one missionary was secured. The young people had found their objective—so great, so absorbing, so fascinating, that it demanded their all; the students had discovered in the young people the means through which they might reach the mission field and be supported, and the Student Volunteer Movement recognized that the students, in the campaign work, had found the channel through which the missionary enthusiasm of the colleges might find its way into the churches. The Forward Movement among our Leagues was begun, and in August, 1896, its first representative, Dr. Smith, was sent to China supported by the Cobourg District.

"Until 1906 the work of our 'Young People's Forward Movement,' though previously carried on by the present secretary, under the direction of the General Board of Missions, was not a specific department. In that year the Forward Movement was made a department of the Missionary Society. The object of the movement from the outset has been to enlist the young people, and eventually the whole church, in definite daily prayer for missions, in faithful, systematic study of missions, and in systematic proportionate giving to missions. Fifteen years ago, when the Forward Movement was organized, the young people of Methodism knew very little about missions and were doing very little for missions. Since that time increased intelligence in regard to missions has resulted in ever increasing gifts of life and money. Since the inauguration of the Forward Movement the missionary income has steadily increased. Since the year of 1895-6 there has been given by the whole church \$6,137,941.30 for missions. In all departments there

has been a steady and rapid increase in the missionary income. Comparing the givings of last year with the year 1896, the missionary givings of the church from all sources show an increase of \$461,206.29 or 170 per cent, the General Board 160 per cent, increased, and the Women's Missionary Society 237 per cent, and the givings from the Epworth Leagues, in comparing these two years has increased \$47,745.00 or 944 per cent.

"The last quadrennial report shows that 32 missionaries in China and Japan and 22 in Canada had been assigned for support. At the present time all the missionaries in China and Japan, namely, 63, and 49 missions and missionaries in Canada have been assigned for support, besides all the outgoing missionaries to China and Japan have either been assigned for support, or application has been made for the privilege of supporting them.

"The Methodist Church appreciates the fundamental importance of training and guiding the young people in their work

for missions, and she has shown much wisdom in her encouragement of the young people by providing for their missionary education and training, and by allowing them to assume the responsibility of supporting missionaries and special objects. This policy has tended to make the work of the young people serious and progressive.

"The Forward Movement published literature during the past four years amounting to \$19,241.00. The stock on hand at present amounts to \$8,826.00. The sale of missionary literature is not a commercial enterprise. The aim is not to make money, but to make missionaries and missionary supporters. The missionary library is most and drink to the missionary life of the League. We cannot expect the people to continue to pray for the heathen of whom they know nothing. If they do not pray with the understanding they will not give systematically. All our colleges are contributing men and money on the Forward Movement plan to the work, under the General Board of Missions. Some can go; can you? Most can give; do you? All can pray; will you?"

The Student Volunteer Movement

DOES IT SEND OUT MISSIONARIES?

In a late number of the *New Century Teachers' Monthly*, Rev. J. Mervin Hull gave a succinct summary of this epoch making movement, and from his article the following particulars are cited for the information of our readers. Further information relating to our own phases of the work may be obtained at any time from Rev. F. C. Stephenson, M.D., Methodist Mission Rooms, Toronto.

WHAT IS THE STUDENT VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT?

It is a recruiting agency for foreign missions in colleges and other institutions of learning. Its sublime purpose is to give all men in our day, an adequate opportunity to know and receive the living Christ. It encourages students to dedicate their lives to foreign missionary service, and sign the declaration:

"It is my purpose, if God permit, to become a foreign missionary."

WHEN, WHERE AND HOW DID IT ORIGINATE?

At the first international conference of Christian college students, held at Mt. Hermon, Mass., in 1886, at the invitation of D. L. Moody, 251 men from 89 colleges were present, and 100 of these registered their purpose to become missionaries. Four students were appointed to visit colleges. In 1888 permanent organization was effected, taking the name Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions. Mr. John R. Mott was elected chairman, and has continued to hold that position.

WHAT IS ITS FIELD?

The institutions of higher learning in the United States and Canada, in which more than 250,000 students are enrolled. There are corresponding movements among young people in Great Britain, on the Continent, in Australasia and South Africa.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

A staff of secretaries is employed, and conferences and conventions are held. A number of traveling secretaries who are student volunteers go to the mission field, visit the colleges, deliver addresses on missions, organize mission study classes and student volunteer bands.

No. The volunteers offer themselves to the regular Missionary Boards, and when ready are sent out by these. Fifty denominational Boards and many special agencies have sent out these Volunteers.

WHAT HAS IT ACCOMPLISHED?

1. It has reached by its propaganda nearly, if not quite, 1,000 institutions of higher learning in North America.
2. It has inaugurated a mission study campaign, and this has given rise to the Young People's Missionary Movement.
3. It has prepared and issued at low cost, excellent text-books upon general and specific themes of foreign mission work.
4. It has raised the standard of qualifications for intending missionaries.
5. It has led tens of thousands of college students to acquire the habit of systematic and proportionate giving to missions.
6. It has furnished 3,861 volunteers who prior to January 1, 1909, had reached the mission field.
7. It has a list of several thousand young people now studying at the various educational institutions of our land with the dominant purpose of preparing themselves for foreign mission work.

DOES THE VOLUNTEER MOVEMENT HOLD MEETINGS?

Once in four years an International Convention is held. The sixth of these was at Rochester, N.Y., December 29, 1909, to January 2, 1910. 2549 student delegates attended. 735 institutions of learning were represented. 405 presidents and professors in colleges testified by their presence the importance they attach to the movement. Speakers, missionaries and officers of mission boards swelled the enrolled attendance to 3747.

"If man aspires to reach the throne of God,
O'er the dull plains of Earth must lie the road.
He who best does his lowly duty here,
Shall mount the highest in a nobler sphere;
At God's own feet our spirits seek their rest,
And he is nearest Him who serves Him best."