

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following extract, from a recent number of the *MISSIONARY OUTLOOK*, will serve very well as the first paragraph of this introductory note:—"The story of missions is the most fascinating story in the literature of the last hundred years, but in order to tell the story effectively, those who speak in our missionary meetings must steep themselves in the literature of missions—now so abundant—and then tell the story as men and women who are thoroughly in earnest about the matter. Next to this is the work of scattering information broadcast by means of the printed page. And just here lies a difficulty; missionary literature, though abundant and deeply interesting, is not available, for the most part, in condensed form, such as can be read by busy men in moments of leisure. It would pay the Missionary Society many times over to have a man or woman of the right stamp to do nothing else but condense and print missionary information and scatter it broadcast through the churches."

This witness is true. Missionary facts are the fuel for missionary fire, but the facts are so widely scattered through a voluminous literature that few, comparatively, know anything about them. A year ago Messrs. Funk & Wagnalls, of New York, issued a "Cyclopædia of Missions," consisting of two royal 8vo volumes of over 600 double-column pages each. Such a mass of digested information on missionary topics was never before brought together in one publication, but the price was \$12.00 for the two volumes, which put it beyond the reach of many. Some cheaper method of circulating the information so laboriously gathered was demanded, and in the following pages Mr. Ross has made a laudable effort to satisfy the demand, at least in part. Of course it was impossible to condense more than a tithe of the information into so small a compass, nor has this impossible task