

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

WOMAN'S WORK FOR WOMAN IN AMERICA

[A paper read before the Union Meeting of Woman's Foreign Missionary Societies in Kingston, by Mrs. Machar, Corresponding Secretary of the Kingston Woman's Foreign Missionary Society.]

(Continued.)

To such noble proportions, in ten years, have grown the Woman's Missionary Societies of the Presbyterian Church of the United States. They were founded on no definite or uniform plan, and amidst no little scepticism regarding the tendencies and usefulness of such a movement. Growing from within rather than moulded from without, and modified by varying circumstances, they have not aimed at any rigid uniformity, and their elasticity has given variety and fulness to their work, some of them including Home as well as Foreign Missions within their sphere of operations. "Thus," as was well said by Mrs. Perkins at their union meeting last May, "under God's shaping hand, our work formed itself, and thus ever since the same hand has moulded it, not with any cast iron rigidity of outline—there is no such moulding in the great workshop of the Lord—but with the gracious and elastic curves which can embrace a world for Christ."

They have thus practically proved, what many at first doubted, that Woman's Foreign Missionary Societies are neither superfluous nor likely to interfere with the general work of the Church. This large supplementary contribution of \$176,000 is not deducted from the receipts of the general fund, which has largely increased, not diminished, with the growth of the woman's work. Such organizations were needed, and are needed, among ourselves, mainly for two reasons, first, that there is an immense work for woman which only woman can do, and secondly, that by such societies our Christian women at home are brought, as it were, into contact with the devoted workers abroad, and the ignorant and suffering women among whom they labour. Many a kind and tender-hearted woman in our happy Christian land would soon lose her present indifference to Foreign Missions were she brought to realize the actual condition and urgent needs of her down-trodden heathen sisters. Many a Christian woman who has never sacrificed a luxury or undergone a privation that the perishing might have the bread of life, must feel stung with remorse when brought into actual contact with those of her sisters who have given to this cause their lives—their selves. The General Assembly of the United States early recognized this principle when in the first year of the organization of woman's societies, it declared that the women of the Church must work, not *abstractly* but *directly*, if they would work efficiently, and in accordance with the laws of their nature. At the end of the first decade of the experiment they adopted unanimously the following resolution: "That the Assembly will guard and cherish woman's work for woman as an agency peculiarly adapted to the work for which those societies were originally organized, and in which the Christian women of our churches, are so specially and deeply interested."

Nor has the Foreign Missionary work fulfilled the fears of those who dreaded that it might interfere with the claims of the Home Mission work. The law of Christian energy is not the law of physical energy. The power of love to do grows by doing, and it will generally be found true as it has been found emphatically true in the Presbyterian Church of the United States, that "the officers and members of Foreign Missionary Societies are as a rule, and have been for many years, actively and earnestly engaged in some form of woman's work for Home Missions."

From the wonderful progress and success of the movement for woman's missions in the United States, we may well draw much stimulus and encouragement. The first secret of their success we well know, is the open secret that may be ours as well—the faith and love which has been the inspiration of the whole. But the methods by which they have worked are worthy of our consideration also. Their organization is a most favourable one, sufficiently elastic to provide for differing circumstances and differing needs, and affording convenient centres for those annual gatherings which are sources of so much quickening impulse and refreshing sympathy. The Presbyterian

Societies bind together the local Societies under the protecting care of the Presbytery. And the six central Societies now hold such meetings as the present for sympathy and conference under the venerable shadow of their General Assembly.

One means of progress on which our American sisters place much reliance, is that of the common hour of prayer on Sabbath evenings. There can be no closer or tenderer bond of sympathy between the widely scattered members of such Societies, and between the Societies at home and their lonely, isolated workers on the foreign field, than the consciousness of meeting weekly in spirit, to pray for the success of the work that is dear to all. And, apart from the promised answers to believing prayer, we may be sure that those who thus unite their prayers for Foreign Missions will not be laggards in labours or in gifts.

Another thing to which the American Societies pay much attention is the awakening of missionary interest in the young, even in the children. We know of their countless Mission Bands, and they try to gain the boys as well as the girls. The writer of this paper, as representing here the Juvenile Mission Scheme of our Church, would suggest that this Scheme affords a mode of interesting the children without interfering with Mission Bands where they may be formed, and extending to places where the formation of such Bands is scarcely practicable. As such, it is hereby commended to the interest and sympathy of the Societies here represented.

The last of the methods found serviceable by our sisters, which need be mentioned here, is their abundant supply of missionary periodical literature. The monthly magazine entitled "Woman's Work for Woman," has been published regularly since the very beginning of the movement, and has a circulation of 10,000 copies. "Children's Work for Children," a juvenile monthly, has also a large circulation. Other periodicals, entitled "Our Mission Field" and "Woman's Evangel" and several newspapers, are channels for information and missionary impulse to flow through. Most useful of all, perhaps, is the "Monthly Letter"—a small and inexpensive publication—a number of copies of which are on the table. Each number contains either an interesting letter from the field, or a brief statement of suggestive facts or thoughts concerning the practical prosecution of the work. They are published by a committee chosen from the six Societies, and go monthly to thousands of Auxiliaries all over the land. This is only the second year of their publication, but already their beneficial effects have been felt. The present writer would rejoice if this union meeting should be a link in bringing about such a union of the Societies here represented for the purpose of issuing such a useful publication. The Society of the Western Section is most kind in sharing its letters, multiplied by mechanical means, with other Societies. But the advantage in issuing such a series of monthly letters as might be done by all our Societies united would be its greater comprehensiveness and variety. One month we might have a glimpse of our Indore work, through one of our female missionaries there. Another letter might shew us the work in Trinidad. Another might take us to the New Hebrides and another to Formosa, in which we must now feel a more profound interest than ever before. And another still might bring us to share in the cares and joys of our sisters who labour to lighten the darkness of our own countrymen and countrywomen in French Canada. To scatter such publications broadcast would be in itself no mean service to the mission work of our Church. Were a tenth part of its noble opportunities understood and realized by the women of our Church at large there could hardly be the indifference that we find to-day; we should scarcely find Christian women spending hundreds of dollars on unnecessary luxuries, and offering one or two dollars perhaps to the cause emphasized by the parting command of our Lord.

But if the stream of our missionary effort is to broaden and deepen, as it has broadened and deepened among our sisters, the current of our Christian faith and life must be fuller and stronger first. Only the grateful love that flows from a profound consciousness of forgiven sin can bring and break the alabaster box. Only they who have found in Christ the light of life, and into whose hearts His love has entered as a transforming power, can have an adequate motive to self-sacrifice of any kind, in order that others, too, may find in Him the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

THE LATE REV. DR. MUIR, OF GEORGETOWN.

The Rev. James Crichton Muir, D.D., who entered into his rest at the manse, South Georgetown, Quebec, on the 9th inst., in the eighty-third year of his age, was no common man, although the greatness of his character and attainments was not always apparent to the casual observer. Born in Dumfries, Scotland, he received his preliminary training in the academy of his native town, and was *dux* of the school at the time of leaving it. Through the patronage of the rector of the academy, who was proud of the acquirements of his pupil, he received an educational appointment in England, which he retained two years; and in this situation he had an opportunity of confirming the knowledge he had gained at school, and of laying a foundation for still higher classical attainments. To the end of life he remained master of the *minutiae* of the Latin and Greek languages; the fact of having to superintend, at one stage or another, the education of his own large family of boys and girls, since there were no superior schools in the Chateauguay valley, keeping up his acquaintance with grammar. He was about twenty three years of age when he matriculated in the University of Edinburgh, the institution in which he took his full course of seven years. Already he had become distinguished for insight, freshness and independence of thought. He had already both observed and reflected, and his years and experience gave him a decided advantage over lads in their teens, especially when he competed with them in those subjects in which reach of thought came into play. He gained the first prize of his year in the moral philosophy class, then taught by John Wilson. He was a divinity student under Dr. Chalmers, from whose earnest, broad, generous nature he drew a deep inspiration, as so many others of the young ministers of that generation did. The tone of his mind was fervently evangelical, and one could easily trace in him the enthusiastic Chalmersian influence. He had for contemporaries in Edinburgh, Cunningham, Candlish, Hetherington, Prof. Macdougall, Dr. H. Bonar, Dr. Cook of Quebec, and Dr. Williamson of Queen's College, with all of whom he stood on a footing of intimacy, as he was inferior to none of them in general acquirements, while in some departments he was superior to most of them. Like many others of Scotland's greatest sons, he enjoyed all through his college career the stimulus that came from having to maintain himself by teaching, while prosecuting his professional studies. He was licensed to preach the Gospel in the year 1832, and soon after went over to Cork, in Ireland, as a tutor, and at the same time he supplied a Presbyterian station that had been opened in that town in connection with the Synod of Ulster. While living there he had an opportunity of obtaining an insight into Irishmen and Irish questions. He always evinced a strong liking for Pat, and on this subject was his conversation more interesting or enlightened than when he took up the perplexing problem that is the burning political question of our day. Returning to Scotland, he was for two years missionary at Port Glasgow, under Dr. Barr, afterwards minister of St. Enoch's Church, Glasgow. About this time the Church of Scotland began to awake, in some measure, to the duty which she owed to her children across the sea, stirred up by the clergy reserve question to which her attention had been called by repeated letters and deputations from Canada. The "Glasgow Colonial Society," the forerunner of the General Assembly's Colonial Committee of later days, was formed for the purpose of sending suitable men to maintain "the blue banner" in Canada, having Dr. Burns, of Paisley, for its energetic Convener. Dr. Cook had been called to Quebec in 1835, and his college friend, Muir, was induced by the Colonial Society to accompany him. In September, 1836, Dr. Muir was ordained and inducted into the pastoral charge of Georgetown, on the Chateauguay River—then a wilderness—by the Presbytery of Quebec, Dr. Cook presiding on the occasion. The people among whom he settled had been most of them hinds or shepherds in Scotland. They were, therefore, poor, but they had vigorous frames and strong wills, and, above all, a reverence for God's Word, and a relish for religious ordinances. Dr. Muir had the satisfaction of living to see the same people in circumstances of worldly comfort and independence not often surpassed in the most favoured districts of Canada. It may be matter of surprise that a man of