

a few cases marked success has been realized. The small grain of mustard seed has produced a great tree, extending far and wide its friendly shade, and affording nourishment and life to hundreds and thousands.

These thoughts are suggested by the perusal of an exceedingly interesting volume just issued—"The Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions." The volume, which is very handsomely got up, gives an interesting account of the origin, operations, fields of labour, evangelistic agencies, and results of this important Missionary Association. Like many other great movements, the American system of missions had a very small beginning. It originated with a few pious young men. A boy overheard his mother say that she had devoted him to God as a missionary. When brought under the influence of the Gospel, he remembered these words of his mother's, and his thoughts were turned toward the subject of missions. He entered college, and in connection with the study of the geography of Asia, the idea of a mission to some part of that continent was formed, and pondered. The idea was communicated at a prayer meeting to a few like-minded young men. A society was formed by the young men, having for its object, "to effect, in the person of the members, a mission to the heathen." Through the exertions of Mills, the young man in whose mind the idea first assumed shape, another society was formed at Andover, and from that the proposition was made which led to the organization of the American Board.

So small and apparently insignificant was the origin of the missionary enterprise in America. But such an origin is not, after all, singular in the moral and spiritual world. So it was in the Reformation. That great movement, so far as human agency was concerned, originated with a solitary monk, who a few years before had been a poor boy singing from door to door for bread. So in a still higher sense was it when Christianity was first introduced into our world. It was a little stone cut out without hands, that, in God's own time, smote the mighty power of pagan Rome, and became a great mountain, to fill the whole earth.

From its small beginning, the American Board soon proceeded to great undertakings. The Board was organized in 1810. On the 6th February, 1812, the first missionaries were ordained, five young men of highly respectable talents and of devoted piety. Western India was the field selected, and Bombay was the first station occupied. Afterwards, as the duty and privilege of missionary effort became more felt and appreciated, and as the funds, which the first year only reached one thousand dollars, came in with greater liberality, the field was extended, and one new mission established after another. Ground was broken in Southern India, in Northern Ceylon, among the Nestorians, in the Islands of the Pacific, in Africa, in China, and in the far west of America itself, among the aboriginal tribes of the western continent. The work done may be thus described in the language of the Rev. Dr. Hopkins, who preached an eloquent and appropriate discourse on the occasion of the jubilee meeting of the Board:—

"It has sent out four hundred and fifteen ordained missionaries, and eight hundred and forty-three not ordained—in all, twelve hundred and fifty-eight. These have