

WES. MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Annual Meeting.

CONTINUED.

In WESTERN AFRICA, the important Mission at Sierra Leone, continues to enjoy much prosperity.

Through the blessing of God accompanying the appointed ordinances of religion, the work of religion both deepens and extends. There is an evident improvement in the tone of personal piety among our people, and there has been a nett increase of Three Hundred and Fifty-eight in the number of full and accredited Church-members during the last year. The most serious difficulty which is now experienced at this Mission has resulted from the rapid increase which has taken place: in consequence of which there is not Chapel-room sufficient for the accommodation of the people, nor could a sufficient amount of subscriptions be raised upon the spot to erect large new Chapels to meet the exigency which has arisen. The number of Church-members and Scholars connected with the Bathurst-street Chapel at Free-Town is Eleven Hundred and Seventy-six; but the Chapel will not accommodate more than Six Hundred persons. The Grass-Field Chapel will only contain Seven Hundred, but the Church-members and Scholars alone amount to Thirteen Hundred and Seventy-nine; and the Gibraltar Chapel, also, is not half large enough to contain the congregation. Exertions have been making for some time to raise a sufficient fund for the building of the proposed new "Bathurst-Chapel," and the sum of Seven Hundred Pounds has been contributed towards it by the people; but the amount received from all sources is not yet sufficient to meet the expense of the erection. The Missionaries write upon the subject with great feeling and earnestness, apprehensive that the work must eventually fail, if such a Chapel is not erected. It is a great triumph, however, that the great amount of contributions from our Religious Societies and Congregations. In the Education department progress is made. "We are using," the Missionaries report, "the best agency of which we can avail ourselves; and, upon the whole, the Class of Teachers now employed are superior to any we have ever before had in the service of the Mission." The Missionaries refer to the Training Institution in a very encouraging strain. They say—"The young men of this kindred institution are our hope. We look to them as the future instruments, under God, of spreading the knowledge of the Redeemer throughout this vast continent; and we trust that, by prayerfulness and diligence on our parts, and with God's blessing on the work of our hands, they will be prepared to sow the precious seed of the Word in the hearts of their benighted countrymen, which shall spring up unto everlasting life."

On the Gambia, the promising state of things at St. Mary's, which Mr. Ridger reported last year, continues to realize the expectations which were then formed. The work has advanced. There has been a decided improvement in the tone of piety among the people. The number of Church-members and Scholars connected with the Mission at St. Mary's is now One Hundred and Fifty. The Subscriptions to the new Mission-Chapel have been considerably increased, and the Chapel has been erected, and is now open for public worship. The progress of the work at St. Mary's is such as to give us every reason to believe that the work will be carried on with vigour and success. The number of Church-members and Scholars connected with the Mission at St. Mary's is now One Hundred and Fifty. The Subscriptions to the new Mission-Chapel have been considerably increased, and the Chapel has been erected, and is now open for public worship. The progress of the work at St. Mary's is such as to give us every reason to believe that the work will be carried on with vigour and success.

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and we feel it, too, in our own hearts, in that burning love for the souls of our perishing fellow-men which only God can kindle in our hearts. In addition to the encouraging circumstances enumerated in this general view, the gratifying fact must be noticed that six of the Native Governors have been recommended as sufficiently qualified to act as Catechists in the service of the Society.

A very gratifying testimony in favour of the Society's Mission in Ashanti has been given by Sir William Windham, the Governor of the Gold Coast, in the Journal of his recent Visit to Kumasi, contained in a Despatch addressed to the Right Honourable Earl Grey, and printed by order of the House of Commons during the last Session of Parliament.

After describing the barbaric pomp displayed at his public reception by the King, in a large open space in the Capital, his Excellency remarks—"Immediately after the procession had closed, we repaired to the Wesleyan Mission-House where we found comfortable arrangements made by the Rev. Mr. Hillard, the resident Missionary in Kumasi, for convenient quarters during our stay. Greatly as I had been interested with the manner in which the King had received me, the appearance of such a vast number of uncivilized men under such entire control, the new style of building exhibited, and its contrast with the ever-fresh and pleasing green of the banyan-trees, I was equally interested and excited at the appearance of the Wesleyan Mission-house,—a neat cottage, built chiefly with the teak or ebony wood of the country. As I sat down in the airy, spacious hall, in the cool of the evening, after all the toils and excitement of the day, and contemplated this little European establishment, planted in the midst of barbarism, two hundred miles into the interior of Africa, exhibiting to thousands of uncivilized Pagans the comforts and conveniences of civilized life, and the worship of the true God, I could not but think myself and my fellow-missionaries, in the great triumph achieved by Christ's unity and civilization, and the subsequent part of the Journal, of his Excellency, in describing a visit which he received from the King, observes—"He came to the street in the beautiful bala-phanton presented to him by the Wesleyan Missionary Society in 1841; and I was pleased to observe, from the excellent condition of the platoon the great care which he has taken of so valuable and a precious present. Remaining upon a conversation with the King on another occasion, His Excellency adds—"Matters relative to the Wesleyan Mission in Kumasi were then referred to, and I was much gratified to find how completely the Mission has secured his confidence and esteem."

In the course of the last year, an arrangement has been made which may have an important bearing on the cause of Christianity in Africa. John A. M. has been appointed to the post of our Mission-Chapel, and has since been engaged in the work of the Gospel in the most successful manner.

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Jesus Christ, His Son our Lord! Our Redeemer, who is going on to the Father to plead for their salvation. I am very glad to see the prosperous state of the Church at Cape Coast. Regarding the change of this Station, I humbly submit to the appointment you have given me, believing that it is the sphere in which the Lord of Hosts has placed me, and to labour. The friends of Christian Missions will not fail to offer prayer to Almighty God in behalf of this interesting young man; that he may be graciously enabled to maintain his integrity, to be a faithful witness for Christ at the Court of his royal relative, and "to testify" to both the Princess and the People of Ashanti, "the Gospel of the Grace of God."

In consequence of the reduction which has taken place in the number of English Missionaries in the Slave Coast District, Badagry and Akkompa have been left under the care of an Assistant-Missionary and other Native Assistants.

The Society's Missions in the BRITISH WEST-INDIES continue to present an unfavourable aspect. The deteriorating influence which have been at work in these Colonies, since the alteration in the duties on sugar, still prove a serious connotation to Missionary operations. Increasing poverty is injurious to the spiritual interests of the people, by absorbing many of them to such an extent in cares and anxieties respecting outward things, that they become negligent of the public Ordinances of Religion; and, from the same cause, the pecuniary receipts of the Missions are so considerably diminished as to render it necessary to contract the sphere of Missionary effort just at the juncture when the pecuniary circumstances of the people are becoming more favourable. Instead of diminished, pastoral attention and care. The Committee have endeavoured to meet towards supplying the deficiencies in the Local Reports as the state of the Society's Funds would allow, but they are not able wholly to meet the emergency of the case. In the Local Reports from the several Districts, there is much that is encouraging. In many places there is a great work in progress, and the influence of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of Sinners from the errors of their ways is a delightful prospect. But the good which has been effected has been somewhat retarded by the oppressive exertions which have been made by the public authorities in these islands, to the number of Church-members in the British West-Indies is the painful result.

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EDUCATION.

House of Commons—Wednesday, April 17.

(Continued.)

Lord J. Russell said, he should be very glad if any bill were brought forward for the purpose of providing education for the mass of the people of which he could fairly support the second reading. But there remained for him the grave question, whether there were any grounds upon which he could justify the expenditure of the public money in the support of such a system of education merely secular in its character. Nothing but the most extreme necessity would justify the establishment of such schools. It is a part of the duty of the Government to provide for the education of the people, but it is not a part of their duty to provide for the education of the people in a system of education which is merely secular in its character.

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