

THE MISSIONARY HAYSTACK.

I know some little children who are very fond of asking who first thought of things—"Who first thought of beds, Auntie?" "Who first thought of pins?" and "Who first thought of a great many other things?"—till sometimes I think I must always have an encyclopædia under my arm to be able to answer all their questions. Not long ago one of them asked, "Who first thought of our missionary society?" and it came into my mind that perhaps there were a great many other children asking the same question.

It was not discussed in any great assembly of learned men; nor organized with much solemnity; not at all. It was just talked over by a few young men sitting, by the side of a haystack out in a field in Williamstown, a beautiful little town among the Berkshire hills in Massachusetts. The idea did not come from the brains of gray-haired ministers; it originated in the mind of one little boy. His name was Samuel J. Mills, and he was no larger nor brighter nor wiser than many of you; but he was very fond of his good Christian mother and used to listen very earnestly to everything she said. One day he heard her say that she had devoted him to the service of God as a missionary; so when he gave his heart to the Saviour, some time afterwards, he thought a great deal about the heathen and longed to go and teach them.

With these ideas he went to college, and there he found four other young men who loved to get together and talk about their Heavenly Father, and to pray for the coming of His Kingdom on the earth. Sometimes they used to go out into the woods, where they could be sure of being quiet; and one day, while they were talking under the trees, there came up a heavy thunderstorm, and they took refuge behind a neighboring haystack. There young Mills proposed that they should do what they could to send the Gospel to the heathen, saying they could do it if they would. So they sat and talked by the haystack.

The dark clouds were above them, but they did not notice them, nor the flash of the lightning, nor the thunder echoing among the mountains. They knelt together in prayer, and as they prayed, the heavens grew brighter, and the dark clouds rolled away.

From that little meeting came after a while, our American Board. People did not think very much about it at the time, but fifty years afterwards, when the Society had sent out hundreds of missionaries, and there were thousands of Christians in the churches in heathen lands, the place where the haystack stood began to seem very sacred and memorable; and, that it might not be forgotten, some good men placed a monument on the spot. This monument, with the haystack carved on the side, has on top a globe representing the world, throughout which the Gospel must be preached.

The five young men who sat and talked there have all passed away, and the monument erected to their memory may some time crumble into dust, but the work which they began will be known through all eternity. Yet they simply did God's will, and if you do what God wants you to, little friends, who knows but you may do as much as they to help on this glorious work?—*Mission Day Spring.*

If you have a concern for the things that are God's, He will also be careful of thee and thine.—*Leighton.*

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