

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

LADY AHOK IN IRELAND.

The *Christian*, of London, gives the following information respecting the reception of Lady Ahok in Ireland :—

A social gathering was recently held in Parochial Hall, at Clontarf, near Dublin, to meet Miss Clara Bradshaw, who has returned from China in company with a Chinese lady of rank and her native personal attendant. Both were attired in the old world costumes, which have been worn by Chinese women since the days of the Pharaohs.

Rev. M. Bradshaw said this was the second instance on record of any Chinese lady of position visiting Europe ; nor could the audience well conceive the marvellous change which such an undertaking involved. Miss Bradshaw's return had been necessitated by a complete prostration of strength, and her medical adviser at Foochow had quite unexpectedly insisted on her leaving for home with only three days' notice. Her Chinese friend, on hearing that she must return alone, became so distressed that, with her husband's consent and approval, she decided to accompany her. The chairman felt that she ought to have a public recognition of such marvellous kindness, which might well recall the praise of the Roman centurion : " I have not found so great faith ; no, not in Israel."

He therefore proposed the following resolution ; " That this meeting, having assembled to welcome Miss Clara Bradshaw on her safe return from China, and having learned the extraordinary friendship, tenderness and devotedness of her Chinese friend, the Honourable lady of Diong Ahok (Mandarin of Foochow), who had, at a few hours' notice, decided to break through national customs and leave her home and family rather than allow Miss Bradshaw to undertake the journey alone, hereby records its unbounded admiration of such Christian sympathy, and brave and generous conduct, and they trust that her own and her husband's desire, that her visit may excite fresh Christian workers to go to China, may be abundantly fulfilled."

This resolution being carried, Miss Bradshaw intimated to Lady Ahok the purport of what had taken place, and asked her to say a few words of acknowledgment. Accordingly, with the greatest simplicity and self-possession, she said (each word of her sentences being translated by Miss Bradshaw) she was very glad to meet them all and was very thankful to have been brought over to England, that her trust in God had enabled her to come. She then asked Miss Bradshaw to read out in Chinese a passage in the New Testament, and then to translate it literally ; on which Lady Ahok made some comments.

FOREIGN MISSIONS IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES.

There is a most interesting letter extant, written by James I. to the archbishops, authorizing them to invite the members of the churches throughout the kingdom, to assist in the prosecution of this and kindred works of piety. His majesty reminds them of what had been done " as well for the enlarging of our dominions, as for the propagation of the Gospel among infidels, wherein there is good progress made, and hope of further increase, so as the undertakers of that plantation—Virginia—are now in hand, with the erecting of some churches and schools for the education of the children of those barbarians which cannot but be to them a very great charge, and above the expense which the civil plantation doth come to them," and commends them to urge through the bishops, on the clergy and laity, the duty of " giving all assistance and furtherance to so good a work, in as liberal a manner as they may," and " that these collections be made in all the particular parishes four several times, within these two years next coming," the money " to be employed for the godly purposes intended, and no other." No less a sum than \$20,000 was thus collected. This is the first public document of the kind ever issued in England for the religious benefit of its foreign possessions, and clearly recognizes the obligation of Christian people to uphold and spread abroad the faith they possess.

In the following reign, Charles gave directions in the charter he granted to the colony of Massachusetts, in 1628, that the people from England " may be so religiously, peacefully and civilly governed, as their good life and orderly conversation may win and invite natives of the country to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Saviour of mankind and the Christian faith "

Such sentiments were not confined to one great religious party. The Puritans were more intensely and uniformly religious than their antagonists, and we find, therefore, in the time of Cromwell, manifestations of evangelistic zeal of an unusual order, not only on the part of individuals, but systematic and public. It was in 1646 that John Eliot commenced his labours among the Red Indians of New England, which continued until his death in 1690, and led to such remarkable results. He was the truest Protestant missionary England had produced since the Reformation, and he did more to develop the missionary spirit in England and America than any other person.

But at the time Eliot commenced his mission in Massachusetts Mr. Thomas Mayhew was preparing to engage in similar service among the Indians of Rhode Island. The Mayhews, for five generations, until the beginning of this century, laboured here with singular devotion and marked success. Inspired by the example of Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, Mr. Richard Bourne established a mission at no great dis-

tance from the two just mentioned. His labours soon extended to some twenty places, where the Indians resided, and enlisting the sympathy of others, the work extended until, in New Plymouth Colony, there were, in 1685, no fewer than 1,439 praying Indians, exclusive of children.

The following century had a similar group of labourers. In 1734 Mr. Sargeant began on more systematic lines than any of his predecessors, at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and was followed by the renowned Jonathan Edwards. Thirty years after, Mr. Birtland commenced to labour among the Oneidas, and in many instances with marked results. But of all such labourers David Brainerd is the best known after Eliot, and, though his term of service was brief, extending only from 1743 to 1747, yet, his personal holiness, the entireness of his consecration, the remarkable power of his ministry on some Indians, and, perhaps, his early death, produced a profound impression in the religious circles of America and England. Brainerd was the agent of a society in Scotland for propagating Christian knowledge, and laboured first in the province of New York and then in Pennsylvania. The work he so nobly and efficiently commenced was carried on, though not with equal results, by his younger brother.

The same principles which led to Eliot's noble endeavours in America caused the formation of the first missionary society in England. During Cromwell's Protectorate an ordinance was passed in 1649, authorizing the erection of a corporation to be called by the name of the " President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England," and a general collection was ordered to be made in its behalf in all the parishes of England and Wales. This charter was renewed and enlarged at the Restoration, and styled " The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the parts adjacent in America," and its object was defined to be " not only to seek the outward welfare and prosperity of these colonies, but more especially to endeavour the good and salvation of their immortal souls, and the publishing the most glorious Gospel of Christ among them." The revenue of the corporation never exceeded \$3,000 a year, but with this they assisted from twelve to sixteen English and Indian missionaries with salaries varying from fifty dollars to \$150, and also erected schools and supplied them with books. Eliot derived substantial aid from its funds, especially to enable him to complete his translation of the Bible, for at one time he received \$2,000, and at another \$2,300, for this purpose.

In his " Advertisement touching on Holy War," Lord Bacon, in 1623, complains that " the Christian princes and potentates are they that are wanting to the propagation of the faith by their arms," and suggests that some Protestant order of knighthood might do great service in this direction. Bacon's conception was political and Romanist, rather than Christian, but Cromwell had far truer understanding of the genius of Christianity and the means by which it should be spread. He is credited, on the authority of Stoupe and Bishop Burnet, with the noble design of forming a council for the avowed purpose of extending and upholding Protestantism throughout the world. " It was to consist of seven counsellors and four secretaries, for different provinces. These were : the first, France, Switzerland and the valleys ; the Palatinate and the other Calvinists were the second ; Germany, the north, and Turkey were the third, and the East and West Indies were the fourth. The secretaries were to have \$2,500 salary a piece, and to keep a correspondence everywhere, to know the state of religion all over the world, that so all good designs might be by their means protected and assisted. They were to have a fund of \$50,000 a year at their disposal for ordinary emergencies, but to be further supplied as occasions should require it. Chelsea College was to be made up for them, which was then an old, decayed building."

We see no reason for questioning the substantial accuracy of this report. It comes to us from reliable sources, and it harmonizes with the character, the principles and the policy of Cromwell. Nothing equal to it for boldness, completeness and mature largeness of conception had hitherto been suggested, or was heard of for some time afterward. There was great need of some more vigorous and well sustained methods for Christianizing the colonies and reaching the lapsed masses of the heathen than yet had been adopted. The patents granted to various colonies and companies, by the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, professed to care for the religious edification alike of settlers and aborigines, and this undoubtedly was one of their aims, but practically little was done, and that little was imperfect. The only colonies which in any adequate manner strove to be Christian, and to convert the pagans near them, were those of New England, and this they did in spite of enormous difficulties. No others had in them as large a proportion of avowedly religious persons, nor elsewhere were there those who were as devout, as earnest, or as self-reliant. Clergymen were sent out, though not in adequate numbers, and it was usually a part of their instructions to teach the Indians and slaves, as well as minister to the colonists, but the double duty required far more ability and zeal than usually they possessed. Their services to their own countrymen were lacking in evangelical fervour, the natives were despised and neglected. They were men usually requiring supervision and discipline, and this they had not. They were not amicable as Congregationalists and Presbyterians were to their congregations and fellow-ministers. The instances were numerous in which they were at strife with the governors and councils of the colonies. Nor was there any ecclesiastical authority near enough and sufficiently strong to enforce duty and discipline. It was not until 1787 that any colonial bishop was appointed. The clergy equally in America, Africa and Asia were under the distant authority of the Bishop of London, and the consequences of such a remote supervision may be imagined.

Through these causes and the want of such co-operation and continuous effort as missionary societies now give, less was accomplished than might have been. Even noble workers, such as Eliot, Brainerd and the Dutch and Moravian missionaries, were either afraid or indifferent respecting the value of a native ministry, and when they were personally successful, the work languished when their presence was withdrawn. The true missionary sentiment was of slow growth, and so were the methods by which it was to become effective. The end of the seventeenth century inaugurated a distinct advance in both sentiment and methods, but it was one hundred years more before there was another marked advance, and now, after almost another century, we seem to be on the eve of a yet nobler, freer, and more extended development of missionary energy and power.—*Rev. Edward Storrow.*

Sabbath School Teacher.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

July 13,
1890.

THE GREAT SUPPER.

Luke 14.
15-24.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.—Luke xiv. 15.

INTRODUCTORY.

Jesus and His disciples were still in Perea east of the Jordan. He had been in Jerusalem attending the feast of Dedication. During that short visit He had plainly announced that He was the promised Messiah. Some who understood what His claim meant took up stones to stone Him because He called Himself the Son of God. He then withdrew again to Perea, where near Bethabera the incident recorded in to-day's lesson took place.

I. The Great Supper.—Listening with interest to what Jesus had been saying while the company reclined, according to Eastern custom, at the table of the hospitable Pharisee, one of the guests admiringly says : " Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." By that the man meant truly that it would be a blessed thing to be an invited and welcomed guest in God's kingdom, to partake of its privileges and share in its joys. Whether the man fully understood all that his saying meant is hardly probable. He may have assumed without any real ground that he was in a condition to enjoy the blessedness of which he spoke. The bearing of the Saviour's reply is that more than a mere desire to enjoy the blessings of the heavenly kingdom is needful if that supreme blessedness shall be ours. In the form of a parable that all can comprehend Jesus teaches us the way by which an entrance into His kingdom can be gained. Under the figure of a great feast the blessings of salvation are often represented in Scripture. Dean Alford says : " The great supper is the kingdom of God, the feast of fat things in Isaiah xxv. 6, completed in the marriage supper of the Lamb, but fully prepared when the glad tidings of the Gospel were proclaimed." The Gospel affords the soul's sustenance and is its unfailing source of joy and delight. Before the feast was spread invitations were given, " A certain man made a great supper and bade many." The primary application of these words is to the Jewish people, who by their religious training and the direct messages addressed to them by God's servants the prophets, were invited to the great supper. So now by means of the Scriptures, the teaching of the Gospel and the teaching of the Sabbath school, Christ is still graciously inviting us to the great feast He has prepared for us. When some great festivity in the East is to be held, invitations are sent out beforehand, and, when the preparations are complete, messengers call upon the guests who have been previously invited and intimate to them that the feast is ready. In harmony with this custom Jesus illustrates His meaning. He says that at supper time the giver of the feast " sent his servant to say to them that were bidden, Come ; for all things are now ready." Christ is the servant who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. He came to this world to suffer and die for man's salvation as the sent of the Father. His coming and atoning sacrifice completed the preparation. The fulness of the time had come, and thus He says, " Come ; for all things are now ready."

II. The Invitation Rejected.—The people to whom the invitation had been sent had after all no desire to accept it. When the messenger came they each had an excuse, but all the excuses came from the same motive. It is said here by the translators that all with one consent began to make excuse. They did not want to go, but they did not care to say that right out. They must, therefore, frame a plausible story, so that they may not give offence to him who had invited them. The real reason of their disinclination to go to the great supper comes clearly out in what follows. It was worldliness that had all of them in its grasp. The first mentioned gives as his excuse that he has bought a piece of ground and he must go out to see it. Very politely he adds " I pray thee have me excused," but he shuts himself out from the great supper that has been provided. So does the spirit of worldliness still induce many to excuse themselves from entering the kingdom of God. The next invited guest offers the excuse that he has bought five yoke of oxen, and he must go to prove them. He is in the midst of his business and has time for nothing else. He cannot be in two places at once, and he prefers the bargain he has made to the kingdom of God. He, too, is very polite in declining the last invitation sent him. The last instance given is that of the man who has been newly married. If war had broken out, this would have been a permissible excuse of exemption from military duty, but it might not be altogether valid for declining the invitation to the great supper. Even the closest earthly relationships afford no excuse for declining Christ's gracious invitation.

III. Another Invitation Issued.—The master of the house does not receive the excuses of those who declined his invitation however politely they had expressed themselves. Stripped of all excuse the refusal to come simply meant there were other things that for the time being were more attractive to them than the great feast that had been prepared. It was a slight put upon the hospitable intentions of the giver of the feast. Possibly also the master of the house saw through the disguises behind which the refusals were sought to be concealed. At all events He who now says " Come ; for all things are now ready " knows the secrets of all hearts and it is impossible for any of us to make a valid excuse why we should remain from the blessed feast that Christ has spread for us. According to the parable the rich and well-to-do were first invited, but now it is the purpose of the master of the household to turn to another and less favoured class. Instead of going again to the fine houses on the principal street, the messenger was now to go to narrow lanes and alleyways and invite the poor, the lame and the blind, the class not usually invited to the festive tables of the rich and fashionable. The narrative here is condensed. If these poor people made excuses, such as that they did not like to come, or that they had no fashionable attire in which to appear, there is no word of it here. The messenger returned and tells that he had obeyed his master's commands, and that the poor people had come to the feast, and still there was room for more. So the messenger is once more instructed to go outside the town and urge acceptance on all who were to be found there. Possibly this denotes the poorest of the poor, the homeless and houseless wanderers who sought shelter for the night by the wayside and beside the hedgerows in the country roads. These it would be necessary to compel, not by force but persuasive urgency and entreaty. It was the will of the entertainer that his house should be filled with guests for all of whom ample provision had been made. The meaning of all this is abundantly evident. God has made full and rich provision for our salvation and everlasting welfare. He invites us graciously by the most persuasive of all messengers, by His own well beloved Son, to come freely and obtain complete redemption and all the blessings that implies. The lesson closes with stern and awful words, but yet strictly true. " I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

The Gospel feast is one of perennial joy and gladness. The invitation to the Gospel feast is direct, gracious and free. It is the utmost folly and ingratitude to slight and reject an invitation that comes from the God of love and mercy. No one, however poor and despised, is on that account shut out from the Gospel feast. If we are excluded from the blessedness of eating bread in the kingdom of God, we will only have ourselves to blame.