

in old England—bonnie Scotland—the Emerald Isle—in catholic France and Spain—amid the mountains of Switzerland—in Denmark and Norway—among the sturdy natives of Prussia—in Rome itself—in the land of the Czar—in the Celestial Empire—in Japan so long bolted and barred—along India's coral strand—in far off Kaffir Land—in the land of the Pharaohs—in Mahomedan Turkey—in the islands of the Pacific—aye—and in that land where Christianity first saw light, even in the town of Nazareth itself this organization has effected a footing and entered upon its work.

Young Men's Christian Associations are not a thing of yesterday. They have (under their present form) existed long enough to lay claim to permanence. But united effort of "young men for young men" is not a peculiarity of the present day, or even the present century. As far back as 1632 a number of London apprentices united together "for prayer, reading, and religious conversation: for the mutual communication of knowledge, and with a view of strengthening each other against the solicitations of evil company."

Still later on (about the year 1678) an Association of Young Men was formed, for the purpose of mutual edification in Godliness. In order to secure proper decorum, a code of rules were adopted, and the Association was thus fully organized.

The original design was simply to afford each other "mutual assistance and consolation in their Christian warfare," that they "might better maintain their integrity in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation." But a desire to benefit others soon entered into their plans. *Individual* effort was the order of the day, and it was decided that "every one should endeavor to bring in one other at least into their Society."

The following incident in connection with their work is cited by the Rev. Josiah Woodward, Incumbent of Poplar (who published an account of the rise and progress of these Societies):—

"I was present at one of their conferences, when a very poor man came, with most earnest affection, to return them thanks for what they had done both for his body and soul. It seems he was a perfect stranger to them all,

and to every other person in the place, when God cast him down by a sharp and long sickness, in which (as he said) his body and soul had like to have perished together. He had lived a very ill life, and been much disused to the ordinances of God, by reason of his seafaring life: and being now come on shore sick, and being above a hundred miles from his abode and acquaintance, he fell into great want. Upon which, some of this Society perceiving his distress, recommended him to the rest; and they readily allowed him a weekly pension for eight weeks together, till he was recovered. And one of the Society being a chirurgeon, carefully dressed a very grievous sore which he had, and by God's blessing restored it to perfect soundness. Others of them went to him and read good books by his bed, which tended to the improvement of God's visitation upon him: they also fetched the minister of the place to him, who visited him often, and prayed by him, and got a collection from some charitable neighbors for him. And upon the whole he recovered, and seemed to be a reformed man, and came there to render his praises to God, and thanks to his Christian friends, for that which had been done for him."

Similar Societies were organized in other parts of London, while branch Societies began to rise all around them, and in 1698 thirty-two distinct bodies of them were established within the limits of the city. The movement spread to Cambridge, Gloucester and other towns in England; and thence to Ireland, where, under the encouragement of the Archbishop, their success was so marked that in Dublin alone, from beginning with one Society of three or four members, they in a few years increased to nine or ten distinct institutions. The members of these societies, realizing the benefits which they themselves had received, gave all possible assistance to others. "I have known some of them," says Woodward, "who have been at their own liberty come out of the midst of the city, after their shops had been shut up, three or four miles to the outmost parts of the suburbs, to give instruction and encouragement to a newly planted Society; returning again a considerable time after night, in all the inconveniences of the darkness and uncertain weather,