

be signed officially till it had been considered by the Executives named. The force of this objection cannot well be controverted; but in order that the attention of all concerned may be called to the matter, and an intimation given of the only line of action on which it seems to be possible for all the Societies to unite, it is deemed necessary and expedient to publish the "Letter" forthwith, even without the signatures.

But some may ask, Why should anyone object to the former proposal to affiliate the Leagues, etc., with the Woman's Missionary Society? Chiefly for two reasons: First, because the act is *ultra vires* of the powers given to either Society by the General Conference; and, secondly, because, if carried out, it would seriously interfere with an important part of the constituency from which the General Missionary Society draws its revenue. In fact, let the Leagues and other Young People's Societies all affiliate with the Woman's Missionary Society, and in twenty years' time the General Society will have no constituency left. On the other hand it was clearly seen that the absorption of Mission Circles and Bands by the Epworth Leagues deprives the Woman's Missionary Society of a good deal of revenue hitherto received, and something had to be done to meet the case. The result, as we have seen, is the compromise method indicated in the "Open Letter." In the meantime we would earnestly entreat our young people to remember that upon them, in the course of a few years, will devolve the support and control of all the missionary agencies of the Church, and that it is their bounden duty to give these agencies their loyal support, and to avoid whatever will have the least tendency to weaken our Connexional unity.

The Students' Volunteer Movement.

ONE of the most significant developments of Christian activity and missionary zeal, in the history of recent times, is to be found in the Students' Volunteer movement for Foreign Missions. As to its origin, opinions may well be divided. Like the Reformation, it had its "morning stars," consecrated young men in theological seminaries and elsewhere, who felt the constraining power of the love of Christ, and the authority of the great commission, and who bent longing eyes on the realms of heathen darkness at a time when attempts to convert the heathen were regarded by many Christians even as altogether Utopian. As time went on these "scattered lights" increased in number, and the flame was fanned by the great revival gale of 1857-8, and the simultaneous opening of doors in India, China, Japan and the Islands of the Sea. Later still a more intense religious life began to permeate the colleges and seminaries of the country, and this gave a further impetus to the fascinating idea of a world-wide evangelism. It needed only earnest personal appeal from eloquent lips to fire the material so abundantly provided. This was supplied at the Summer School at Northfield, where organized efforts to arouse the colleges may be said to have had its beginning. But Northfield only gave form and direction to forces already at work. Some

five or six years earlier, during a visit to Victoria College, Cobourg, some seventeen young men volunteered in a body for mission work, the condition being that they should all be sent to the foreign field; and this may have been but a sample of what was to be found in many other colleges.

When once the college movement was fairly inaugurated it spread with amazing rapidity. In four years' time some 6,000 names had been enrolled. The very rapidity with which the organization grew, constituted its chief embarrassment; and including, as it did, many of the younger students, gave rise to an apprehension that, as in the case of the famous Children's Crusade, unregulated enthusiasm would end in utter disaster. But there were saving elements in the movement. Wise, matured Christians were watching it with kindly interest, and among the young men who came to the front as leaders were some whose natural enthusiasm was chastened and steadied by solid piety, who saw the rocks ahead and tried to guard against them. And so, by the good providence of God, the movement continues, and, notwithstanding weaknesses and mistakes, which seem to be inseparable from any movement in which man has part, is still doing good service by awakening interest, scattering information, and turning the prayerful thought of the youth of the churches towards the great missionary problem.

One circumstance that has discouraged many, although it might easily have been foreseen, is the utter impossibility of utilizing the services of all the volunteers. Many—perhaps the large majority—at the time of volunteering were not ready for the work. Their education was yet unfinished, in some cases only begun, and as months and years went by considerable numbers turned aside to other walks in life, concluding that their "call" to the mission field had expired. Many more are found to be unsuitable, physically, mentally, or even spiritually, and these also drop out of the ranks. But allowing for all this there is still a noble residue, well qualified in all respects to be successful missionaries, and these are waiting for the call of the Church to interpret for them the call of the Holy Spirit as to when they shall go, and where, and how. Here we meet the most serious aspect of the whole case. Assuming, as we have good reason to do, that these young men and women, many of them at least, are called of God to work in the foreign field, Why are they not sent? To this question there is but the one oft-repeated answer, Lack of money! And this raises the whole problem of Christian stewardship and emphasizes the question, "How much owest thou unto thy Lord?" Just here light may shine upon another matter. Of the vast numbers who have felt drawn towards mission work, but by over-ruling providences have been hindered from entering upon it, may it not be that in a great many cases the call was not to *work* in the mission field, but to earn money to support those who do? The commissariat is one of the most important departments of the missionary army.

THE average wages of Japanese do not exceed ten cents a day; yet in the last year Japanese converts have given to mission work nearly \$26,000.