

REPORT OF THE FOREIGN MISSIONARY BOARD.

FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

The population of India is estimated at two hundred and sixty millions. The majority of these profess Hinduism, in some of its forms: probably about forty millions are Mahomedans; the inhabitants of Ceylon, Burmah, and Siam are for the most part Buddhists.

Missionary efforts were commenced in Southern India in 1705, when Ziegenbalg and Plutchan, two Danish ministers of the Lutheran persuasion introduced Christianity into Tranquebar, then under Danish rule, and met with considerable success. The Scriptures were translated into Tamil, the language chiefly spoken in that part of India; some hundreds of the natives professed the Gospel, and many schools were established for the instruction of the young. Twenty years after the arrival of the first missionaries, it was recorded that six hundred persons acknowledged the truth and bore the name of Christians. The work has been advancing ever since, and has spread over a large part of India. There are thirty-five Missionary Societies now in operation, occupying upwards of five hundred stations, and employing six hundred missionaries, besides some thousands of native assistants. Native Christians, or persons generally professing the Gospel, are supposed to number about 300,000 of whom 70,000 are communicants in the churches to which they belong. But the hindrances are many and great. In addition to the immoralities of heathenism the progress of true religion is checked by the ungodly lives of Europeans, by the ritualistic practices of the clergy of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, by the injurious influences of the caste system, and by the wide circulation of books, both in English and in the native languages, advocating infidel tenets: yet, notwithstanding these hindrances, the good cause is steadily advancing, and Hindu idolatry has received so serious a shock that its best friends predict its decline and death.

English missionaries did not reach India till the latter part of the last century, when the Baptist Missionary Society was formed, and Dr. Carey entered on his splendid career. This was in 1793. The London Missionary Society formed in 1795, sent missionaries to Southern India ten years afterwards, who were stationed at Vizagapatam in 1805; "but thirty years passed away before a single convert seems to have been gained." (Sherring's History, p. 456). Success began to appear in 1835. The attention of the missionaries seems to have been given to translations and schools rather than to preaching the Gospel, and hence the progress of the truth has been slower than in some other districts.

The American Baptist Missionary Union commenced missionary work in the Telugu country in 1836, and the success has been very cheering. That country contains eighteen millions of inhabitants, about five millions of whom occupy the portion which has been assigned by mutual agreement with our American brethren to missionaries from the Canadian Baptist Society and from the Maritime Provinces. Brother McLaurin is stationed at Cocanada, and will probably be joined by brother Timpany, who is at present visiting