

World of Missions

Women's Foreign Missionary Society. (Western Division)

Its Genesis, Organization and Present Position.

This society was organized in 1875 by the Foreign Mission Committee of the General Assembly, for the express purpose of helping in one department of its work, viz.: the evangelization of women and children in heathen lands. Its beginning was simple. Two members of the Foreign Mission Committee, Prof. McLaren and the late Rev. Dr. Topp, called a meeting of Presbyterian ladies in Knox Church, Toronto, and explained to them their object in doing so, which was to have a woman's society in our Church, similar to those so successfully carried on in the American Presbyterian Church. A constitution was adopted similar to the Philadelphia one, with modifications to suit our circumstances. Societies of a like character were formed about the same time in Kingston and Hamilton, with slightly different constitutions; but these have both joined the General Society as Presbyterian auxiliaries.

The idea of the constitution is that there should be in every congregation an auxiliary and mission band, and that all the auxiliaries and bands in a Presbytery shall form a Presbyterial society which shall meet, by attendance of delegates, once or twice a year. Every woman who pays \$1 annually, either to the General Treasurer, or through an auxiliary, is a member of the General Society, which meets once a year in the month of May. These annual meetings have been held in several Ontario cities, more frequently in Toronto, as the most convenient centre.

The affairs of the General Society are managed by a board of thirty-six women, resident in Toronto, and to these are added all the Presidents of Presbyterial Societies, auxiliaries and mission bands, throughout the western division. This board meets weekly and attention is given by its members to the minutest detail of business. The board is elected yearly at the annual meeting of the General Society, and when thus chosen elects its own officers by ballot from the thirty-six resident in Toronto.

The machinery is simple and very complete and workable. First, there is the General Society, which is the deliberative and legislative body. Second, there is the Presbyterial Society, which embraces all the auxiliaries and mission bands within the bounds of the Presbytery. Third, there are local auxiliaries and bands which include, in so far as they may be actively interested, the women and children of the churches.

Presbyterial organizations, as well as local auxiliaries and bands, have ample scope for the exercise of individuality, and the modifications demanded by varied circumstances, as they are at liberty to adopt their own rules and regulations, provided they do not conflict with those of the General Society.

From the thirty-six managers resident in Toronto there are elected annually a president, four vice-presidents, a treasurer, eight secretaries and nominating, finance and executive committees. A monthly periodical, called the Foreign Mission Tidings is published and distributed to all the auxiliaries and mission bands. It records the most important letters received by the Board from the foreign field, and at the same time affords a medium for the communication of the decisions of the Board and other interesting matter to the Society at large.

Thousands of dollars' worth of clothing are sent annually to the various Indian schools maintained by the Church, and to the feeble and infirm on the Reserve. These supplies are placed at the disposal of the missionaries in charge of the Reserve, and the testimony to the good accomplished is both general and abundant.

GROWTH OF THE HOME WORK.

At its first annual meeting the Society reported one life member, 18 auxiliaries, 3 mission bands, the contributions amounting to \$1,105.30.

The statistics of the 22nd annual report are:—Presbyterial Societies, 27; total auxiliaries, 635; total mission bands, 304; total membership, 21,265; total life membership, 1,436; total contributions, \$44,276.97; total of clothing sent to Northwest, 35,000 lbs.; issue of Foreign Mission Tidings, 16,300 per month.

OUR FOREIGN WORK, CENTRAL INDIA.

The first missionaries sent by the Presbyterian Church in Canada to India were Miss Rouger and Miss Fairweather, who sailed for India in October, 1873. The Church had then no organized mission in India, therefore it was arranged that these missionaries should labor under the care of the American Board of Foreign Missions. In 1876 the Church chose Central India as a suitable field in which to begin organized missionary effort, and in 1877, Rev. J. M. Douglas and Rev. J. F. Campbell were appointed missionaries of our church in India. Upon reaching their field of labor, the former settled in Indore, Central India, the latter went for a few months to Madras, but eventually settled in Aibow, Central India. Soon after, Miss Rodger and Miss Fairweather joined Mr. Douglas at Indore.

At the first annual meeting of the W.F.M.S. (W.D.) in April, 1877, it was decided to assist the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church, to the extent of paying the salary of one of these lady missionaries, and a portion of the salary of the other. Last year the Society expended the sum of \$21,892 in maintaining woman's work at the various mission stations of the church in India alone.

These stations are Indore, Mhow, Neneuch, Rutam, Ujjain, Dhar. At present the Society is supporting sixteen women, who have been appointed to these important fields. The work may be divided into Medical, Educational, Village and Zenana.

The Society has four medical women in the field, and one on furlough. These are prosecuting dispensary and medical mission work at the stations of Indore, Aibow and Neneuch. At Indore there is a fine Woman's Hospital, built by our Society, at a cost of about \$10,000, which is under the charge of our lady missionaries.

The Educational mission work includes the Girls' Boarding School at Indore, various schools at each of the stations, Sunday Schools, Women's Bible classes, etc. The Boarding School at Indore was erected by the Society at a cost of \$5,000. The various schools, native assistants required, the Women's Dispensaries, and Hospital, are all maintained by the Society.

Many Zenanas, or homes of high caste women, are visited by our lady missionaries and their native workers.

FORMOSA, JAPAN.

In connection with the work of Rev. Dr. Mackay, missionary of the church in this island, our Society provides the expenses of the Girls' School at Tamsui, and maintain a number of Bible women. The Girls' School building was erected some years ago, at a cost of \$3,000. From forty to fifty girls receive instruction in this school from year to year.

HONAN, CHINA.

This mission originated in the Students' Volunteer movement, which had its origin among the students of Cambridge University. In 1893 two of the students of Princeton Seminary visited Colleges in the United States and Canada, and, in response to their appeals, 100 Canadian students declared themselves willing to become foreign missionaries. Soon after the students of Knox College and Queen's College decided to support two missionaries in the foreign field. Honan, a large province in North Central China, about 600 miles northwest of Formosa, with a population of nearly 22,000,000, was selected as the field, and the two missionaries chosen were Rev. James Goforth and Rev. Dr. James Fraser Smith. Since that period two stations have been opened in Honan, and the staff largely increased. Our Society has four missionaries in the field, two of whom are medical women. The salary of one of them, Miss Dow, M.D., is paid by the Montreal W.M.S.

INDIANS OF THE NORTHWEST AND BRITISH COLUMBIA.

There are in the Dominion, according to census returns, 109,205 resident and nomadic Indians, and of these, probably one-half are yet heathen. The Presbyterian Church, through its Foreign Missionary Committee (W.D.), commenced its Rev. James Nesbit, missionary to the Indians of Prince Albert. From that time the work has steadily expanded, new fields have been added, until at present there are fourteen stations occupied, where there are nine Industrial and Boarding Schools and five Day Schools maintained, attended, in all, by about 800 children.

Our Society expended last year almost \$13,000 for the maintenance of these schools, salaries of teachers, repairs to buildings, etc., etc. We have also from time to time expended large sums in the erection of new school buildings, notably at Round Lake, Birdie, Crowstand and Alberni, and from year to year the children of the schools are largely clothed by our Auxiliaries and Mission Bands.

The Society has also in the past contributed a stated amount yearly to the support of the school work, carried on by the church under the supervision of the Foreign Missionary Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (W.D.), in the islands of Trinidad and the New Hebrides. Through this work, so briefly touched upon, we confidently expect, through the blessing of God, to train a mighty army of native workers, who shall go forth to win their countrymen to the Lord Christ.

In common with the other Women's Missionary Societies of the denominations, we have a weekly hour of prayer, between the hours of five and six o'clock on Sunday afternoon, when we gather unitedly around the Throne of Grace, to plead with the God of Missions for a blessing on our work. Many of our members set apart their offerings at this hour of prayer.

Our aim is, as far as the way is opened, to obey the Lord's last command, and carry the Gospel to every creature. To do this as effectively as possible, we desire to have an Auxiliary or Mission Band in every Presbyterian congregation in the land, to bring every woman in these congregations to membership in our Society, and to train the children to practical and active sympathy with the missions of the church.

The Coming Harvest.

We are praying for the harvest,
For the gleam of reaping time,
When the fruit of all our sowing
Shall appear in every clime.
We are praying for the dawning
Of the bright and golden day,
When the Gospel of the Saviour
Shall from pole to pole hold sway.

We are working for the harvest,
Oft in gladness, oft in tears,
Often times with hearts aglowing,
Often times with doubts and fears;
All the labor and the sorrow
Point us to the future years,
When the love of Christ doth conquer,
And the Golden Age appears.

We are waiting for the harvest—
Waiting calmly day by day,
For we too must rest in quietness,
While we work and while we pray,
On the hill-tops of our silence,
With the eyes of faith and love,
We can see the coming glory,
Streaming earthward from above.

Hail! thou glorious harvest morning,
Quickly come the day and hour
When the weeping earth shall blossom
'Neath the Prince of Peace's power,
When o'er every tribe and nation
He, the King of Kings shall reign,
And the long departed Eden
Shall return to us again.

There's no time for idle brooding,
No need for despairing words,
Let us all be up and doing,
For the earth shall be the Lord's,
By our praying and our working,
By our faithful waiting, too,
We shall herald in the morning,
When the harvest comes to view.
G. F. in Great Thoughts.

Mr. W. S. Fleming, the missionary who is reported to have been murdered on November at Panghai, went out to Australia in connection with the China Inland Mission in 1895; and, according to the latest available list, dated June, 1898, he was then at the capital of the Province of Kwei Chau. The station of Panghai is on the southern borders of Kwei Chau, about 250 miles south of Chungking. The station is in the midst of the Miaotzes, one of the aboriginal tribes of China. These people have always been very peaceable, and no news has been received of any disturbances in that region.

The December number of Foreign Mission Tidings announces the following new life members of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society (Western Division): Miss Kate Telfer, Bedford; Mrs. C. McGregor, Dunrobin; Miss Jean S. Lovelace, Agincourt; Mrs. Fowle, Erin; Mrs. A. Sutherland, Mrs. John Slater, Dorchester; Mrs. Mary T. Alexander, Winnipeg; Miss W. E. Forbes, Carlton; Mrs. Andrew Bell, Chesterfield; Mrs. R. Edwards, Vancouver; Mrs. T. S. Conley, New Westminster, B.C.; Miss Margaret Moorcraft, Bowmanville.