

W. F. M. SOCIETY.

FOREIGN LETTERS ISSUED MAY, 1885.

MRS. WILSON'S LETTER.

MHOW, February 17th, 1885.

My Dear Mrs. Ewart,—

Mrs. Builder wrote lately to Mrs. Harvie, so fully about the ladies' school work at Indore, that a letter from me on the same subject seems almost superfluous. But having visited all the schools, and seen something of the work done in them, I cannot but speak of the very apparent success attending the labours of our lady missionaries there, in this very important department of missionary enterprise.

In reading accounts of papers read and speeches delivered at the Indian Mission Conference held last year in Calcutta, one could not fail to be impressed with the very prominent place given to the discussion of woman's work among the women of India, and the very high value placed on this branch of mission work. The work of the lady missionary is coming to be more and more recognized as one of the most effectual, if not the most effectual, agency in spreading the knowledge of Christ in a heathen land, particularly in heathen India. A male missionary may preach to any who will hear, in the bazaar, or in the villages, in this country. Or he may open schools and gather in the boys, and give them Christian instruction. But the *homes* of the people are closed to him, the mothers and daughters cannot come under the influence of his teachings. None but a woman can reach them with

Christian and other instruction. Hence the importance of strengthening the lady missionary force already at work in India.

We are, of course, specially interested in the work of our own ladies at Indore and Mhow. You have had very lately details of their work given you, and yet I doubt, if not being on the ground and seeing with your own eyes their labors, you can appreciate them. In a city where the Prince, and as a matter of course, nearly all his officials, are violently opposed to all kinds of Christian mission work, where even the British Resident does all in his power to hinder it, Miss McGregor, Miss Roger and Miss Ross, have opened and *kept open* five schools, in which nearly two hundred Hindoo and Mohammedan children receive daily instruction from the ladies themselves and from native teachers employed by them. No small amount of wisdom and courage has been necessary to the establishing and maintaining of the schools up to the present time. I said to Miss McGregor one day, on leaving one of her school-rooms, "What a wretched place to teach in." She laughed and said, "I am very glad to have any kind of a building. I once feared that my school in this part of the city would have to be given up altogether, there was so much opposition to it."

The history of Miss McGregor's largest school in the city is, I daresay, familiar to you. I did not remember having heard it, and was very much interested in it. A family belonging to the Brahma Somaj, whom Miss McGregor had visited, were anxious to receive some English education, and so offered a room in their house to be used as a school-room. A number of children were gathered in, and Miss McGregor assisted by a daughter of the house, began work, Miss McGregor, of course, giving all the religious instruction. The school was no sooner fairly begun than the authorities came down on it and ordered it to be closed, on the ground of its being a Christian school. But the Brahma Somaj family said, "The school is ours," so nothing could be done for the time. It was, however, very closely watched, but Miss McGregor laboured on quietly, the daughter of the house appearing as the more prominent teacher, and until the work was firmly established no one could find out to whom the school really belonged, and from what source funds came for its support. Two years ago Holkar's wife, who is an intelligent and liberal-

minded woman, gave prizes to the best pupils, (the mother of Miss McGregor's teacher is a sort of lady-in-waiting to the Maharanee) and last year the diwan (prime minister) gave forty rupees to be used for the same purpose. So there will probably be no more trouble now in maintaining this school.

Missionaries here have about as many opportunities and as much need for displaying *tact* as a Governor-General of India.

You will be delighted to hear that last week the city of Indore, recognizing the benefit to the community of her work, have offered Miss McGregor twenty-five (25) rupees a month towards the support of her schools, provided Holkar does not object. It remains thus to be seen whether he will oppose the granting of city money for any such purpose.

Miss Roger has a very nice little school-house containing three rooms, and certainly, with such an advantage, must find her work easier and pleasanter than Miss McGregor and Miss Ross. I wish you could see their school-houses (?) Miss Ross's is a particularly miserable place. It consists of a single, very small room—floor and walls of mud—having in the side a little door-way, (I think there is a door too) about four or five feet in height, but not a single window. Between the smoke from an adjoining house and the dust from the street one is nearly stifled, and one wonders how Miss Ross is able to endure her three or four hours of daily labour in it. This school was only begun last April, so that one cannot expect to find the children quite as orderly, or as advanced in study as they are in the other schools. One little girl who entered among the first pupils, not knowing a single letter at the time, now reads quite fluently in the 2nd book (her own language of course) and has made good progress in arithmetic. She also answers very intelligently questions asked her on portions of Scripture, that Miss Ross has read in the school. Among the scholars is one quite elderly woman who studies very diligently, and who, Miss Ross says, regrets exceedingly that she had no opportunity of learning to read when she was younger.

I could tell you of numbers of interesting pupils whom I saw in all the schools. Indeed after visiting these schools one does not so much wonder at the ladies being so absorbed in their work, that they labour with zeal and devotion which are having a sensible effect on the people of Indore.

As Mrs. Builder intends writing to you soon on the work of the Misses Stockbridge, in Mhow, and as my letter is already quite long enough, I shall say nothing about it. We are fortunate in having secured the services of these earnest and devoted young ladies in our mission, and they are worthy of the fullest sympathy and confidence of the Christian ladies at home.

I feel that we should thank God very sincerely for having given to our Indian Mission so noble a band of lady missionaries, and that we must feel it a great pleasure to be able to assist them in any way, however small, in their work for the Master.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

M. CAVEN WILSON.

NOTE.—Miss Bell writes from Rostock, Germany, that her health is gradually improving.

THE ANNUAL MEETING.

OUR TRIP TO OTTAWA.

A paper prepared by Mrs. Telfer.

We left the Union Station at 8:25 on Monday morning the 13th, amid a drifting snow storm, but fearless of either snow or rain, only considering the errand on which we were going forth, to recount the progress of the Master's work and to devise ways and means for more efficiently carrying it forward, during another year. We were a party of twenty-two, some of our number being from the West, and many more joining us on the way, greatly increasing the pleasure of our journey.

Upon arriving at Ottawa, a number of ladies were at the station with cabs to convey the delegates to their destination. After resting for the night, all felt refreshed and ready for the work of the day.

We met in St. Andrew's Church, a beautiful one, a little different in its construction from our Toronto churches, but nothing behind them in point of beauty. On entering

the church we were decorated with badges, red being the color of the Board, blue for the delegates. The meeting opened at 10:30 by the President giving out the 98th Psalm, "Oh! sing a new song to the Lord," which was sung with great heart, the music being led by a choir of young ladies; Mrs. Gordon, of Harrington, led in prayer, lifting up our hearts in gratitude to God for what He had done for us as a Society, and for the honour conferred on us in allowing us to work for the spread of the glorious Gospel. Mrs. Ewart read from Luke 24th chapter, verse 13th. the walk to Emmaus; the close of the opening exercises were conducted by Mrs. McLaren leading in prayer; the hymn, "More Love to Thee," having been sung, Mrs. Harvie read the minutes of last Annual Meeting. Miss Harmon, in the name of the Ottawa Society extended to the Board and Delegates a most hearty welcome to their city and homes, she thought the Capital of the Dominion a most appropriate place for such a Society to meet, and trusted that much good would flow to them from this visit. Mrs. Ball from the London Society, in a few pleasing remarks replied to this address; after which she addressed a few words of counsel to the ladies present, urging them to uphold the hands of the Presidents of their Auxiliaries by assisting them in conducting their meetings; few she said, but were able to engage in prayer, it needed only the first effort and she felt sure that if they would make that effort, the required strength would be given.

Par. 23, 12 to 15, "Sing to the Lord," having been sung, we were all pleased once more to listen to our President's Address. It was most stirring, urging us on in our glorious work; but as this address will appear in our annual report, any words of mine I am afraid would only detract from its beauty.

Letters of greeting were read from the Ladies' Societies of St. John's, and Harbor Grace, Newfoundland; Indore Society, Quebec; the North-West, and Philadelphia Societies, U. S. The following Societies were represented by delegates, who presented warm and cordial greetings:—The Woman's Missionary Society and the Canadian Woman's Board of Missions, Montreal, the Societies of Halifax, and Pictou, Nova Scotia, and the Methodist and Baptist Societies of Ontario.

Mrs. Ley closed the meeting with prayer. This brought

to a close one of the most interesting meetings of the session. A beautiful motto with the words "Give God the Best," hung at the front of the pulpit. The church was well filled. The ladies of Ottawa invited all to luncheon in the room down stairs. Nothing could exceed the richness of the repast, except the kindness of the ladies, who seemed to vie with each other in their attentions. This afforded an opportunity of meeting in friendly intercourse with many of the delegates from a distance.

In the afternoon the meeting was very largely attended. Hymn 249, "Commend Thy Blessing," was sung; Mrs. Mowat, of Kingston, leading in prayer. Mrs. Harvie, Foreign Secretary, gave her report, I need not characterize it; it was given as Mrs. Harvie alone can do it, the work of each station being gone over. Mrs. Campbell gave a most cheering account of the Home Work. After the reading of the reports. Par. 19, 1-2-6, was sung; when Mrs. MacLennan made her financial statement. Pleased and proud were we all to hear such a statement, \$10,080; still the feeling would arise, what is this among so many. The women of the Presbyterian Church in Canada could double it if they would arise to the help of the Lord. God grant that the day may not be far distant, when instead of ten thousand there will be tens of thousands. When as Mrs. Ley remarked, we will not give God the tenth only, but will keep the tenth for ourselves, and give God the rest. The money was appropriated thus: \$8,230 to Dr. Reid, this along with \$300 left from last year will meet our estimates; we are thus left with a balance on hand —; this it was proposed to allocate as follows: \$300 to the Trinidad Mission, \$600 to the North-West, this will have to come before the Foreign Mission Board for their approval; the rest of the money to be a working fund. I ought to have said that a large part of the afternoon was taken up reading reports from Presbyterian and Auxiliary Societies which will all appear in the Annual Report. Mrs. Thorburn, of Ottawa, led in prayer, asking God to accept our offering, and to enable us to consecrate more of our time, means and life, to His service. I am sure we all felt it to be a sacred moment. Mrs. Steele, of Hamilton, read the report of the Board of Management; it revealed great progress for the year, quite a number of life members having been added. The Nominating

Committee, who met after luncheon, reported the names of the Board for the year. Mrs. Watson, of Hamilton, closed the meeting with prayer. The evening meeting was a great success, one of the elders of the church remarking that it was the largest meeting ever held in that church. A large choir led the music; two solos were sung, one "the Better Land," Dr. Wardrope, presided. Dr. Moore led in prayer. Dr. McLaren gave a history of our rise and progress. Dr. Grant followed by a most stirring and faithful address in thorough sympathy with our work. Mr. Herridge "did not feel inclined to inflict a speech on us at that late hour," but expressed his feelings of pleasure with our success and wished us God speed. A collection of \$105 odd was taken up. I omitted to say the church was beautifully decorated with flowers, two of the ministers sending a lovely basket for the President's table.

Wednesday forenoon was a business meeting, the Board having a good deal of work to dispose of. I am sure you were delighted to hear, that all our most efficient officers honoured us by accepting office for another year.

Wednesday afternoon meeting was opened with hymn 85, "Come Thou long expected Jesus," after which Mrs. McKenzie of Almonte, led in prayer; we had a very interesting paper from Mrs. Fraser, of St. Elmo, on "The Rise and Progress of Missions." It was agreed that our next Annual Meeting should be held in London. Some business having been overtaken, our interesting meetings were brought to a close by a most stirring address from Mrs. Harvie; a large part of the audience being bathed in tears. She closed by asking Christian ladies to take a deep interest in Mission Bands, they were to be our future workers, would soon fill our places; and she hoped would work in a way that would put us to shame. Votes of thanks, and prayer by Miss Harmon brought to a close one of the most interesting and successful of all our Annual Meetings; all felt they had been highly privileged in being present and would not like to miss our Annual Meetings if they were all to be like this one.

We made many kind friends whom we shall not soon forget, and we pray God the influence of this meeting may be felt over our whole Society, so that we may work in the coming year as we have never done before. There would be 150 or 180 delegates present.

NEW SOCIETIES.

Chatham Presbyterial Society, was organized on March 26th, by Mrs. Harvie, the meetings held in connexion with the organization being very interesting and profitable. The Auxiliaries are Bothwell, Blenheim, Chatham, and Chatham Township. Officers: Mrs. Walker, Chatham, President; Mrs. Taylor, Bothwell, Mrs. Bruce, Blenheim, and Miss Robinson, Chatham Tp., Vice-Presidents; Miss M. Stone, Chatham, Secretary; Miss McNaughton, Treasurer.

Balderson Auxilary was organized in Lanark and Renfrew Presbytery in March, by Mrs. McKenzie and Miss Wylie.

BOX FOR INDIA.

Ladies in the vicinity of Ottawa, who agreed to unite in preparing the box to be sent by Mrs. J. Fraser Campbell, will please send their parcels to Mrs Thorburn, 211, Daly Street Ottawa, *before the middle* of June.

List of Articles:—Small brass thimbles, supply of steel and bone crochet needles and knitting needles, patterns of crochet and knitted edgings, in cotton, linen and wool, simple Berlin wool patterns on canvas, such as would do for smoking-caps, directions for these little knitted and crocheted woollen jackets, hoods and petticoats. Christmas cards with texts, puzzles, such as dissected animals and maps, dolls from 9 to 12 inches work-bags, patch-work. Add the material with the work begun. Picture scrap books.

NOTE.—The re-printing of the Missionary Letters is reserved by the Board of Management.