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Foreign Missions At Our Doors

1884



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THE FIRST ITALIAN U. P. CHURCH

Miss Carrie M. Reed

The first work of our denomination for the Italians of Pittsburgh and vicinity was undertaken by some young people connected with the First, Second, and Third churches of that city.

They gathered a number of Italian children into the Sabbath School of the Third Church, and held an evening class in the Second Church, but later it was removed to the old Fifth Church on Webster Ave. Owing to circumstances, the work was dropped for a few months, then was re-organized under the control of the Women's Missionary Society of Monongahela Presbytery, in January, 1900. A sewing school soon followed the English class; and in April of that year, Mr. H. G. Edgar, a student at the Allegheny Theological Seminary, was employed as missionary. He was assisted by workers from the various United Presbyterian churches of the city.

This was the time of plowing and seed-sowing, and while the future held always a ray of promise, discouragements were many. It seemed as though those whom we wished to help spiritually cared chiefly for the loaves and fishes. Priestly opposition was strong, and every means was used by the Catholic Church to prevent both adults and children from attending the mission services.

Still they came, and out of chaos grew finally a system, so that at the time of Mr. Edgar's resignation—July 1, 1901—there were being held regularly a sewing class, night schools, and a Sabbath evening service.

By this time experience had proven that the future success of the Mission lay in securing a missionary who could speak to the people in their own tongue, and to this end the Presbyterial committee at once entered into correspondence with mission workers in other cities. For six months this search continued, the work being carried on meanwhile with varying success by the volunteers. At the end of that time the attention of the committee was providentially directed to their present missionary, John B. Fortunato, who came to Pittsburgh January 1, 1902.

This young man has an interesting history. His family had destined him for the priesthood and on such condition he was to receive a fortune. He was educated in Rome, where he remained for several years pursuing his education in that direction. Doubts assailed him, and finally the conviction that Catholicism was not the true religion caused him to leave the college and abandon all thoughts of the priestly office.

Disinherited and rejected by his friends, he came to America, where in Scranton, Pa., he came into contact with Protestants who lived their religion, and was attracted to the English classes conducted by Rev. Leonardo D'Anna, missionary to the Italians. The English lessons developed into a study of the Scriptures, which resulted in Mr. Fortunato's conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This, then, was the man who presented himself to the committee. Already prepared with a secular education, he at once entered Allegheny Theological Seminary. In addition to his work there, he assumed the charge of the Mission, and to the Tuesday and Friday night schools already established, he soon added an Italian prayer meeting on Thursday evening and two services on Sabbath. Almost his first work was to prepare a brief Confession of Faith in the Italian language, that

he might have something definite to present to those attending the Mission.

All applicants for church membership were expected to sign this covenant.

About a year before the arrival of Mr. Fortunato, the Mission had removed to the abandoned Third Presbyterian church on Sixth Ave., where a chapel and rooms for the night school were fitted up, through the generosity of friends of the Mission.

All this time the Mission was becoming stronger. More Italians were attending the services. Men who came to learn English that they might better their worldly condition, remained for the devotions and grew interested. These services were a revelation to them. They found that the Protestants were not the blasphemers and idolators that they had been taught to think them. They began to inquire, to ask for Bibles that they might search the Scriptures for themselves, and to seek church membership.

There was also a perceptible change in the appearance of the children in their classes. Clean and pleasant surroundings and faithful teachers were having an effect. Untidy hair and dirty faces began to give way to neatness and cleanliness, and manners improved. While at the early Christmas entertainments it had required the combined efforts of missionary and teacher to restrain an unruly crowd, there was now a room full of quiet, tidy pupils, accompanied by their parents, each interested in doing his part to make the affair a success.

Meanwhile the missionary was untiring in his efforts to establish friendly relations with the homes. This frequent visiting made evident the need of an Italian woman missionary, in order to reach the women who are very superstitious, and

being strongly dominated by the priests, are much more difficult to approach than the men. But they must be reached; and in order to do this the committee employed Miss Emmelina Trapini, an educated young Waldensian, who entered the field in 1903 and remained for a year. During that time her efforts did much in breaking down opposition and prejudice, and she succeeded in bringing a number of women into the church. At present the work is being done very efficiently by Miss Marie Vitale, also an educated Waldensian, supported by the Board of Home Missions.

The time was drawing near for the graduation of our missionary. In May, 1904, he received his diploma with honors from Allegheny Seminary.

Monongahela Presbytery held out a helping hand. The Italian mission was fully established. The missionary was ready to take entire charge, and at a meeting of the Presbytery held July 1st, 1904, it was organized as a special mission under the direction of the session of the Third U. P. Church, Pittsburgh, (Rev. J. T. McCrory, pastor).

The Board of Home Missions assumed the salary of the missionary, but by special arrangement with the women of Monongahela Presbyterial the latter were to continue their interest in this mission, and use an equal or greater amount of money in the same work in another field.

Since the ordination and installation of Mr. Fortunato, the mission has been known as the First Italian United Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh. It was felt that the congregation could not do its best work in such uncomfortable quarters; accordingly steps were taken to secure a building site, and a suitable lot was purchased at the corner of Bedford Ave., and Elm St. On it has been erected a beautiful little church, admirably

fitted for its purpose. Mr. Fortunato is still the pastor, and the session of the Third Church continues to have charge of the work; but the Women's Board has been freed from all responsibility.

In writing this article it gives pleasure to recognize the good hand of our Heavenly Father in the affairs of this church. At a time when it was announced that the Mission might be compelled to remove suddenly from its quarters on Sixth Ave., and when there seemed no concerted action or adequate support for securing a permanent home for the Mission, a prayer meeting was held lasting five hours. Some remained during the entire period. Others spent a part of the time. God seemed near. Soon after this everything seemed to take shape for the erection of a building, and in another year the Mission was in its new home, in its own building, at the corner of Bedford Ave. and Elm St.

In the mean time the Mission is becoming stronger. The sewing school has been continued all these years during the winter months, usually closing in May with an outing in Highland Park. The sessions are opened with a half-hour devotional service and an effort is made to teach the girls not only sewing, but Scripture texts, Bible Songs, manners, and morals.

The Sabbath School meets on Sabbath at 3 P. M. There are classes for all ages, and for those speaking either English or Italian. There is a good corps of officers and teachers; and while the attendance is not large, the school is doing good service in the neighborhood in which it is located.

This work has at various times developed along other lines. One year a cooking class was held, the teacher being provided by the Domestic Arts Association. The Carnegie Library supplied a "Home Library" and sent a librarian who advised

the children in their reading. Mr. and Mrs. Fortunato also conducted a class for the instruction of children in the correct use of their own language.

There was also a musical organization, and as the love of music is a portion of the Italian inheritance, this class was an agency for lifting many young men out of vice and indifference and bringing them to Christ.

Since the beginning of 1906 a small bi-monthly religious paper has been printed, entitled "L'Ape Evangelica" (The Evangelical Bee). This gives news of mission work among the Italians in other places, and contains notes prepared by Mr. Fortunato on Christian Endeavor topics and the Sabbath School lessons. It has a circulation of one thousand copies. It is now being published by the Board of Home Missions.

All these things are the outward signs of a movement that is making good citizens for Pittsburgh and for that other "city whose builder and maker is God."

The Italians are a migratory people, going where their labor may call them; so there is a constant change in the church roll, which at present numbers about eighty communicants. The very fact of their moving about, however, seems a part of God's plan for their evangelization, as they carry their religion with them, read their Bibles, and talk with their unconverted comrades.

We have been able to trace the beginning of mission work in other places to the evangelistic zeal of our converts, and one of the most marked instances is the work done by some of the members of this Italian Mission, who returned to their old homes in Italy. Through their influence, a Protestant Mission was established there, and a year later converts of that mission were received into membership by Mr. Fortunato in Pittsburgh.

Surely when people are so willing to work for Jesus Christ, help should not be denied them by us.

In the mission services the men are noticeably reverent. They take part with enthusiasm in the responsive services, the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, and it is inspiring to hear them sing. One does not need to understand Italian to be uplifted by their services.

All the workers are justly proud of the Christian Endeavor Society. In no department is there more evidence of the uplifting power of the Christian religion. To see that room full of young men and women, neat in their dress, well mannered and reverent, with bright, earnest, interested faces; and to listen to the way in which they read and speak and pray, would convince the most skeptical visitor that such mission work does pay. This service, held on Sabbath at 7:15 P. M., precedes the regular church service.

Some young men who were boys in the mission, are now preaching the gospel and rendering acceptable service among their countrymen.

One way that musical friends can help the Italian work is by giving music lessons free, or at reduced rates, to deserving young people who will use their talents in the meetings. This has been done in the First Church, Pittsburgh, and has proved a great help in the work.

The writer wishes to take this opportunity of thanking all those American friends who have not grown weary in well doing. They have not contented themselves with providing a building, the shell of the nut; but in all these years have shown great generosity in ministering to the social life of these Italian brothers and sisters, who even now are returning their loving service, with small gifts from their gardens, flowers on special occasions, and other offerings to the best of their ability.

THE BRUSHTON ITALIAN MISSION

Miss Levinia Smith

In 1905 a call came from Brushton, in the East End, Pittsburgh, for missionary work in the Italian colony of that section. Mr. Fortunato volunteered his services in addition to his regular work and began with a service each Sabbath. To this was soon added a Sabbath School, an English night school, and a sewing school. At this time Miss Emelina Trapini was employed in the down town work and she, too, divided her time between the Sixth Avenue and Brushton Missions. With the loyal assistance of helpers from the United Presbyterian Churches of the vicinity, the work was carried on for a year in this way.

Then came the resignation of Miss Trapini, while Mr. Fortunato's regular work had so increased that it demanded all his time, and with the removal of both missionaries and lack of funds, the future of the Mission looked very dark.

But, as always, God opened a way. After the Sixth Avenue Mission had been organized by Monongahela Presbytery, the salary of Mr. Fortunato was assumed by the Board of Home Missions, and the women of the Monongahela Presbyterial, being thus relieved of this financial responsibility, at once secured the services of Rev. Leonardo D'Anna, a successful missionary to the Italians at Scranton, Pa. Rev. D'Anna had been a member of the Waldensian Church in Italy, and at the time of his call to Brushton was a member of Lackawanna Presbytery (Presbyterian).

He was a truly consecrated man and his work in the Brushton Mission was greatly blessed. During his work there he was most sympathetically assisted by his wife and daughters, to whom much praise is due for their helpful services. Mr. D'Anna took charge of the work on April 1st, 1905. At that time, owing to unfortunate circum-

stances, the attendance at the Mission had been greatly depleted, but it soon began to improve and a few months after a congregation was organized with a provisional session composed of elders from the Homewood Avenue and First and Second Wilkinsburg Churches, with the pastor of the First Church as moderator.

The Mission observed its first communion on Sabbath evening September 3rd, 1905. Eight members were received at that time, four by profession and four by certificate. Heretofore those converted in Brushton had become members of Mr. Fortunato's congregation, but now that there was an organization in Brushton, three of these came home and with Mrs. D'Anna made the four joining by certificate.

Mr. D'Anna's pastorate continued until December, 1909, when he returned to his former charge at Scranton, Pa. During the four years and nine months he was in Brushton the work was very successfully conducted by means of preaching service, Sabbath School, Christian Endeavor, Prayer meeting, English night school, sewing school, and girls' and boys' clubs. Besides these meetings, which were always conducted in the Mission rooms, cottage prayer meetings were held in the homes. As a result of these efforts the church roll was lengthened until, when Mr. D'Anna resigned, it contained seventy-seven names.

The Presbyterial committee having charge of the work were cast down by the decision of their pastor to leave them, but they were not discouraged, for they knew that if the work was of God it would succeed, He would send a shepherd for the little flock; and their faith was rewarded. A call was made out for Rev. Michele Renzetti of Butler, Pa., which was accepted.

Rev. Renzetti was born in Castellamo re Adriatico (Abruzzi), Italy, January 22d, 1878. After attending the elementary schools he entered

a Roman Catholic seminary in Termoli (Campobassio) and spent five years there preparing for the priesthood. He came to this country in 1903 and was converted to Protestantism at Steubenville, Ohio, in 1904. September, 1906, he entered the United Presbyterian Theological Seminary to prepare for the ministry and was ordained in October, 1909. Four years were spent as a missionary in Butler, Pa., where, through his efforts, a United Presbyterian Church was built for the Italians. He began his work in Brushton February 1st, 1910.

Mr. Renzetti is an earnest, conscientious Christian and an indefatigable worker. His aim is a church building for Brushton Mission which will be a successful center of settlement work.

Heretofore the work had been entirely in the hands of Monongahela Presbyterians, but now it passed under the control of the Women's Board, the Presbyterial continuing to be responsible for its maintenance.

The Italians of Brushton are divided into two colonies, one in Wheeler Street, the other about eight blocks distant in Tioga Street. When the work was started the use of a room in a basement of a public school building between these two colonies was secured. The Mission was permitted to occupy this room for almost a year and a half, then its troubles began. No one appeared to want it for a neighbor. Finally, after a third move within six months, it was settled in a small frame house on Brushton Avenue between a livery stable and the Pennsylvania R. R. Neither of these neighbors raised any objections against it, so here it rested for a little over five years. The location was not central enough for the work, nor were the surroundings desirable; but with the limited means at its disposal, it seemed impossible to secure a more suitable place. However, in the autumn of 1910, a store room in a very

good location, at 615 Oakwood Street, was secured, to which the Mission was moved and where it still resides.

The work has always been conducted along the same lines. Night school is the greatest source of revenue in mission work among foreigners. These people come to this country to improve their condition. They are not long here until they learn that if they could speak English they could get better positions. As a good job is what they came for they determine to master the language and get it. So they come to our night schools even though they know they are Protestant, and thus an opportunity is provided for giving them the Gospel. At first many listen only on account of what is being done for them. But God's word never returns to Him void and soon they listen because of interest in what they are hearing. Then they come on Sabbath afternoon to Sabbath School to see what it is like, and again in the evening to hear more of the wonderful teaching. At last, being convinced, they renounce their old faith, or rather lack of faith, and accept the new faith; and their names are added to the church roll, and new names written in the Book of Life.

With the assistance of the nearby United Presbyterian Churches, the Mission has been able to grow by means of its night school. From fall until spring it is open two or three evenings a week, the number of weekly meetings depending on whether or not the public school in this section opens a night school. But it always has a Wednesday evening session followed by a prayer meeting.

There is an active Christian Endeavor connected with the Mission. Whenever a night school pupil begins to show an interest in the Sabbath services he is invited to join their society which meets every Sabbath evening before preaching service. After some training here he usually asks permission to connect with the Church. The social

life of the Mission which he enters through the Endeavor society, makes a strong appeal to a lonely man in a crowded boarding house.

Mr. Renzetti usually has tent services during July or August. The Endeavor Society does good work at these meetings. There are always many standing around outside the tent, persons attracted by the music or who want to hear what is said but are afraid to go into a Protestant meeting. The Endeavor's personal worker's band goes among this outside crowd distributing literature, inviting them in, and doing everything it can to assist the pastor in his work.

Few of the women in an Italian colony are able to make their own clothing or to sew, but they are anxious to have their girls learn, so they are sent to the Mission sewing school. The missionary is thus enabled to reach these children and through them, to a certain extent, come in touch with the mothers. Brushton Mission has reached many children through its sewing school. There are now young women members of the congregation who came in through its influence. They came when little children eight or ten years of age and have been taken out by the priest several times, but they had learned the truth and could not be deceived by a lie.

The sewing school opens the first Saturday in October and closes the last Saturday of April. There are three courses; a course in plain sewing, a fancy-work course, and one in dressmaking. The children always start with the course in plain sewing. When this is completed a diploma is given and they then take one of the other courses.

There have always been a number of boys in attendance at the Saturday school, and it has at times taxed the ingenuity of the leaders to keep them profitably employed. When Mr. D'Anna was in charge these were organized into the D'Anna Club, were trained in temperance and good citizen-

ship, and entertained by military drills and games. This has given way to Mr. Renzetti's Manual Training Class in which the boys are trained in basketry and in woodwork.

The Girls' Mayflower Club of the early days of the Mission has been transformed into two organizations, the Brushton Italian Junior Missionary Society and the Brushton Italian Loyal Temperance Legion, both composed of the same children. Each society meets twice a month. At these meetings both boys and girls are trained in temperance and good citizenship and also learn something about and become interested in the missionary work conducted by the denomination. They are trained to conduct devotional exercises and carry on the business in a parliamentary manner. All the leader does is to teach the lesson and direct during the business portion of the hour. They have secretaries and committees for different parts of the work, some of which report at each meeting.

The Sabbath School of to-day is very different from what it was in the early days of the Mission. Then the greater part of the attendance was a mob sent there for the purpose of breaking up the work if possible and driving away the workers; but by the help of God we were able to withstand the assault. There is now a well organized school of fifty-six members. Almost all are members of the Mission or the children of members. The Cross and Crown system for regular attendance is used and it brings the desired results. On January 1st, 1915, eighteen received gold pins, three the gold crown, and three the bar. Seven have received Robert Raikes diplomas and three of these are hoping to earn their fourth seal this year. There is a special effort made to have the members of the school read the Scripture, and commit portions of it to memory. The results have been very good.

Mr. Renzetti held his first communion in Brush-ton in October, 1910. Twenty-four united with the church at that time, all on profession of faith. Since coming to Brushton he has received one hundred and twenty members, only four or five of them uniting by certificate. If all that have been received into the congregation were connected with it now there would be one hundred and ninety-seven members. But the Italians when in this country are a migratory people. Whenever a man gets out of work he immediately goes on the hunt of a job and keeps going until he finds one. He is obliged to do this. If he does not he has nothing on which to support his family. Because of this, members of Brushton Mission are scattered over several states, some in Canada, and some have returned to Italy. Wherever they go they take with them the good news they have heard in the Mission. This is one way by which the gospel is spread among their people.

One evening a stranger came into night school. Mr. Renzetti talked with him and learned that he had recently come from Italy and that his name was the same as one of his members who had gone away some time before and he had lost trace of. Mr. Renzetti said, "That is strange. We had a man here of the same name but I do not know where he is now." The man answered, "Yes, I know that. He is my cousin and is now in the Italian army. He told me of his new religion and when I told him I was coming to America he gave me your address and told me to come here." The young man was much interested in all he heard at the Mission and is now a member of it and an earnest Christian.

As soon as Italians are converted they become missionaries. Their Christ has been either hanging on a cross dead or a helpless infant in his mother's arms depending on her for care and protection. As the Bible has been a sealed book to them it is not surprising that they readily ac-

cept the teaching that the Virgin Mary is the one to whom they should pray, and the one they should worship. As they listen to the reading of the Word and the explanation of the plan of Salvation, they marvel, and are ready to exclaim, "We never saw it on this fashion." And they always have some relatives or friends that they are anxious to have receive the truth. One member of the Mission has already brought in fourteen of his friends, and another one, twelve.

A young man living down in the city came out to Wheeler Street one Sabbath afternoon to visit a friend who is a member of the Mission and of Mr. Renzetti's Sabbath School class. He did not stay at home to entertain his visitor but took him along to Sabbath School. The young stranger was very much interested in all he heard and asked for a Bible. Mr. Renzetti gave him one and he went home happy. But in a short time his parents found out he had a Bible and was reading it. They immediately told the priest who visited their home, examined the Bible, and told them it was a very bad book and should be destroyed. This was done and since that time their son has not been permitted to visit his Wheeler Street friend. On account of such home training as this, the Italians, when converted, know very little of God's Word. To overcome this ignorance, Mr. Renzetti has for several years held a meeting for Bible study every Sabbath morning in a small room in the midst of the Wheeler Street colony. Here he meets his members and others who will come there but who could not be induced to enter the mission room in Oakwood Street. Each one is given a Bible and together they study the Word. The believers are thus enabled to give a reason of the hope that is in them, and others are brought to know the truth and are made free.

The generosity of the men's organization of the First Church, Wilksburg, has made this possible. Shortly after Mr. Renzetti came they rented this

room for the use of the Mission. It has been used for different purposes and has been a great benefit to the work.

The Italian man is anxious to learn to speak English that he may be able to earn more money. The Italian woman has no such incentive. She spends her whole life in her home where every word she says is understood by all; consequently, few of the women born in Italy ever learn to speak English. They remain foreigners all their lives, knowing nothing of what is going on in the country outside of their colony except as they are told. Their children are trained as they would be were they brought up in Italy. As a rule the women go to confession, but the men do not. The result is the women are more under the control of the priest and, believing all he tells them, are much harder to reach with the gospel.

A young man, one of the first converts, brought his mother to this country about two years ago. He is very anxious for her conversion and has been able to persuade her to attend the different services occasionally. She says that what she hears there is good but she believes that somewhere in the room there is a horse's head that is worshiped. She has never seen it, her son tells her it is not so, but she persists in believing it is there because the priest tells her it is.

Jealousy is another cause for the difficulty in reaching the women. There are homes into which Mr. Renzetti or any other man may not go and talk with the women while the men are away at work. He may go in the evening after the husband returns and talk with him, but while they are talking if the wife comes near to listen she is frequently told to attend to her work.

Mr. Renzetti has been more successful in reaching the women than Italian missionaries usually are but there were so many he could not reach that the Board sent Miss Margharetta Cairus to help with the work.

Miss Cairus came March 1st, 1913, and stayed until August 1st, 1914. In talking of her field of work she said, "Until I came to Pittsburgh I was never ashamed to say, 'I am an Italian.' Oh, these people! They are more like animals than human beings. I dislike to say or think that they are my country people." She is a refined and well educated woman, yet she visited, talked to, and prayed with these women. Her prayers were a revelation to many. After one of them, one woman said, "That was the first Protestant prayer I ever heard and wasn't it queer. It just sounded as though you were talking to God." An organized Cradle Roll with a membership of twenty-one in connection with the Sabbath School is part of her work.

Miss Elinor Ribet opened her work among the women, September 1st, 1914. She is an earnest Christian worker loved by all. By a judicious use of the Wheeler Street room she is quietly accomplishing her mission.

Much has been accomplished, but much more could have been done had the mission been located in rooms suitable for the work.

A building is needed with one room large enough for preaching service and kept exclusively for that purpose, and the remainder of the building arranged for settlement work. A large lot in a fine location, has been bought and paid for by the first Church, Wilkinsburg. An effort is now being made to secure money enough to erect a building. Until this is accomplished the work will continue to be hampered.



WORK AMONG THE CROATIANS

Mrs. J. R. Miller

The Croats are a people from a province in Southern Austria, lying to the northeast of the Adriatic, and forming part of the border between Austria and Turkey. The province covers an area of nine thousand square miles, and embraces a population of about two million souls. They form one of the numerous branches of the great Slavonic family, their language being akin to the Magyars, Bohemians, and other Slavonic peoples.

The prevailing religion of the Croats is that of the Roman and Greek Catholic. To the outward forms of this religion they cling with great tenacity. Until recently the education of the youth has been almost entirely neglected, and on this account about fifty percent of the Croats are illiterate. Hitherto but little effort has been put forth to give the Gospel to these people. The British Bible Society has had colporteurs visiting the country, distributing Scriptures and tracts in their language. Within very recent years the Reformed Church has located two small congregations and is doing some work among these people. About four years ago a Presbyterian Church was started which now has about one hundred members. At present this is the only evangelical work being done in their own country on behalf of the Croats. They are a neglected, destitute and uneducated people who know not the way of salvation and are in great need of the Gospel.

In late years there has been a great migration from among these people to our shores. Only the poorest of the Croats come to this country. In their home land, property is hard to acquire and they are burdened with heavy taxes. Financial oppression therefore is the chief reason for their migrating to American shores. Some come expecting to make this their permanent home, others

to make money hoping some day they may return to their native country. Many of the men come without their families, and live in very unsanitary and degrading environments. Almost without exception they are laborers, working in factories, mills, mines, and in bridge and railroad construction. Only about fifteen per cent of the Croatian immigration are women. They are oppressed with work, and live very slavish lives, having families of six or eight, and a number of boarders besides. In the United States there are over 200,000 Croatians of whom about 17,000 are located in Pittsburgh and vicinity.

When they come to this country they locate in settlements, and bring their foreign life with them and live it here. They live in very small quarters, usually one house sheltering two or three families. There are fewer Croatians among the immigrants than many other nationalities—but none more needy.

A goodly colony of these people have settled in East Ohio Street, and adjacent districts of the North Side, Pittsburgh.

In April, 1904, steps were taken by the Women's Missionary Society of Allegheny Presbytery to inaugurate Mission Work among these people. It was impossible to secure a converted Croatian as missionary, but through the evangelization committee of the Bible Society, a theological student who could speak to the people in their own language, was secured for a few months to work as colporteur, and take a census of the people, distributing Bibles and Testaments as he had opportunity. He worked faithfully, gaining access with some difficulty into the homes, but could not be retained longer.

For several months no one could be found to continue the work. Later another student was secured for the summer months who took advantage of the opening made by his predecessor, and succeeded in distributing a number of Bibles,

Testaments, and tracts in the Croatian and Bohemian languages.

As a result of these preliminary efforts it was found that there were about two thousand foreigners in that section, of whom nine hundred were Croatians. These people had been receiving no religious instruction, except what came from a small Roman Catholic Church, and even that was closed at the time our work began.

In September, 1905, Miss Hormicheck, a young woman who was being educated in a Christian Training School for mission work among foreigners in another field, and who could speak the Croatian language, was employed to give a part of her time during her last year in the Training School to visiting the homes, reading to the people, and helping them in every way she could. She found a welcome in many of their homes, where she read the Scriptures and prayed with the families. During this time another young woman was being educated to become the permanent worker among the Croatians in this field.

In June, 1906, a room was secured and a Sewing School and Sabbath School were started and carried on by Miss Hormicheck until the end of the year, at which time she took up her own special work.

In July, 1907, Miss Ballas took charge of the mission as a permanent worker, continuing the Sewing School and Sabbath School, visiting among the people and distributing tracts in their own language. She worked for four years with a good degree of success, when circumstances developed which seemed to make it necessary for her to give up the work and return to her home. She had won the confidence of many of the people, and they regretted her leaving.

Another young woman was secured to take her place and to continue the work along the same lines. She worked for almost two years. The

mission during these two years did not prosper so well, and was carried on with more difficulty and many discouragements. Again it became necessary to secure another worker and after much investigation it became evident that no foreign-speaking worker was available.

Attention was then providentially directed to the present missionary, Miss Elizabeth Hamilton, who began work November 14th, 1913, and has diligently labored since that time securing more encouraging results and gaining favor with the people.

The Croatian Mission is located on East Ohio Street, North Side, Pittsburgh, Pa. It is under the care of the Women's Board and is supported by Allegheny Presbyterial Missionary Society.

Four meetings are held each week. A Sabbath school is held each Sabbath afternoon, a sewing class and a meeting for boys on week evenings, and an afternoon meeting for girls who are too small to sew. Small boys also attend this class. The best attendance at Sabbath School is in the winter when the weather is too cold and stormy for outdoor pleasures. The average attendance for the year was forty-one pupils and six workers. Ninety pupils attend with more or less regularity. Forty-eight families are in direct touch with the Mission.

At the Christmas entertainment one hundred and ten children were present and about fifty of their parents and friends. At this entertainment the children recited selections, sang from the United Presbyterian Service Program, and rendered a temperance dialogue prepared by the Missionary for the occasion. Both children and parents seemed delighted. The Croatian parents, like parents of other nationalities, are pleased to hear their children "say speeches" and sing.

A temperance band, called the Blue Ribbon Brigade, has been organized and eighteen of the

older pupils have signed the pledge. This means much in a neighborhood where temperance is one of the crying needs. Temperance and Bible stories form a prominent part of every meeting.

The children are taught to cultivate the grace of giving by bringing a small contribution each Sabbath. This collection is used each alternate month for their own work, and the other months it is given to missionary and charitable objects.

A Gospel service is held once each month at which one of the pastors of the city gives an address. These meetings have been well attended by the pupils of the Sabbath School and a few of the parents.

The work is of necessity slow and difficult, and is attended with both discouragements and encouragements. Priestly interference effects the attendance. But the Mission and its workers have the respect and good will of the community.

We desire to make special mention of valuable help given to this work by members of the Tenth and Second United Presbyterian Churches, Pittsburgh, North Side, who have cheerfully and freely given of their time and talents to the assistance of the missionary. All these efforts have been put forth through a desire to assist the stranger at our gates. Many needy people are at our doors. In communicating to them the knowledge of God's glorious gospel, these workers, not only point out to them the way of life eternal, but there is a good reason to hope that through those who shall be thus enlightened, the good news may be also communicated to many of their kindred beyond the seas.



4c each.

40c per doz.

Women's General Missionary Society
of the

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