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American Missionary Association

Secretarial Paper

The Inlook and the Outlook

of the

American Missionary Association

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287 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, N. Y.

The Inlook and the Outlook of the American Missionary Association.

CHARLES J. RYDER.

In seeking to discover the nature of any organization, certain fundamental facts must be considered. Two important questions stand at the threshold of definite information concerning this missionary organization.

- I. What the American Missionary Association Is?
- II. What the American Missionary Association Does?

The answer to these two questions presents the Inlook and the Outlook of this organization.

A large amount of historical and descriptive literature is published from time to time in answer to the last question, "What the American Missionary Association Does?" The fields of labor, the methods of operation, numbers and conditions of peoples among whom this work is carried on, the geographical, social, racial, political and religious conditions of these peoples and other matters of equal interest and importance are set forth in this literature which is kept fresh and up-to-date.

These, however, represent only the output of the factory. They present the products. The work is the justification or otherwise of the organization that conducts it. Still none of these discussions answer the question, viz., What is the American Missionary Association? It is the purpose of this secretarial paper to present briefly and succinctly the answer to this question in considering the first division of the subject, the Inlook. Things familiar to many must necessarily be said. A review, however, of certain fundamental elements that enter into the organization of the American Missionary Association may not prove wholly without a value. As we take this Inlook, our discussion naturally divides itself into three distinct but related considerations:

- (a) The object of the Association,
- (b) The organization of the Association,
- (c) The government of the Association.

All these bear upon that which we denominate the Outlook, namely, II. What Things are Accomplished by the Association?

(a) The object is clearly set forth in the Second Article of the Constitution, which reads: "The object of this Association shall be to conduct Christian, missionary and educational operations and diffuse a knowledge of the Holy Scripture in our own country and other countries which are destitute of them or which present open and urgent fields of effort."

The object of the Association as thus set forth is in the first place comprehensive. It is inclusive rather than exclusive. This is true in several respects.

There were to be no limits through racial peculiarities or national boundaries. The warrant which the Association assumed was to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ among the destitute and needy wherever such might find their habitation. The changing conditions of our own body politic do not create a necessity for any change in the object of this Association as set forth in its constitution. The Orient is pouring its children upon the Western coasts of our nation, and the American Missionary Association, from its early organic provisions and initial conceptions, as well as its history, is the legitimate agent for reaching these multitudes.

But not only is the object as stated in the constitution inclusive in its field, but also in the methods and forms of work. For some time the A. M. A. has informally adopted as the watchwords indicating the many forms of work which are being accomplished through its agency, the following:

"The Farm, the Shop, the School, the Church, the Home." These words certainly indicate a comprehensive method of missionary activity, and this conception is imbedded in this article of the constitution. The development along modern lines of education requires no change of constitution. Industrial Training, Technology, with its important outcome in the economical development of the peoples among whom our schools are planted is entirely within the methods outlined in the constitution. These old heroes who early organized this Association and adopted this constitution, were veritable soldiers of the cross, brave, stalwart, uncompromising. They faced opposition, obloquy and scorn. And they did it not controversially but persuasively. Their conception was not destructive but constructive. They built rather than destroyed. They were prophets, they foresaw, like the seers of old, the unfolding of God's purposes through this mighty nation, and they wrought into the very constitution of this Association that which has exactly fitted it for this great future.

The organization of the Association does not disappoint us. It is fully in accord with this comprehensive object stated in Article II. Let us turn again to the constitution that we may realize how thoroughly representative it is.

Article III of the constitution states that "members of evangelical churches may be constituted members of this Association for life by the payment of thirty dollars into its treasury, with the written declaration at the time or times of payment that the sum is to be applied to constitute a designated person a Life Member; and such membership shall begin sixty days after the payment shall have been completed."

That is, the churches may select for life certain worthy and representative men and women, and as Life Members they become voters in the annual meetings of this Association. But this article goes on farther and states: "Every evangelical church which has within a year contributed to the funds of this Association, and every State or local conference or association of such churches, may appoint two delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Association, such delegates duly attested by credentials, shall be members of the Association for the year for which they are thus appointed.

"The pastor of any evangelical church contributing to the funds of the Association within a year is thereby constituted a voting member for that year."

Each Annual Meeting of the Association, therefore, is a delegate body of representatives from the various churches, local conferences and State associations.

No organization can easily be conceived of as more thoroughly representative. And this representative feature was embodied in the constitution. It was the conception for wise and wholesome administration of great missionary interests of those who founded this Association. It is remarkable how, little by little, this feature of the constitution of the A. M. A. has become the growing conviction of our churches.

But has this provision of the constitution been acted upon; have the various bodies holding a right to representation at the annual meetings of the Association taken advantage of this provision of the constitution? If they have not, of course, the fault would lie with them for not accepting a right and privilege which was fully granted them.

But the Annual Meeting of this Association has been a representative body. Numerous delegates from a wide geographical area have gathered for the administration of its business. The following facts will be of interest to all. They are gathered from the enrolment cards used at each of the meetings.

The number of voting representatives at the annual meetings of the Association during the past seven years has varied from 332 at Cleveland in 1903, to 998 at Springfield, Mass., in 1900. Never less than twenty-three states and territories and several foreign nations have been represented by delegates at each meeting.

These facts must be encouraging to the constituency of the Association who desire that the work shall keep in touch with the churches and that these Christian bodies shall have an immediate and active agency in the administration of the work. This Inlook into the life of our Association fully warrants our confidence in the method of wide representation.

So much for the equipment of the factory. Now, what of the output? That the organization of the Association from the very first has been wise, wholesome and open is self-evident. What of the field of missionary activity? Has this representative method of organization worked? Is a delegate body efficient in the administration of so vast a missionary enterprise?

Here, again, conditions furnish abundant encouragement. Not only has the machinery been modern and well-appointed, but the output has abundantly warranted the method.

II. The Outlook:

In turning from the method of administration of the A. M. A. to the field in which its work lies, certain facts at once encourage our enlarged support and stimulate our confidence.

(a) The changing conditions of our body politic and the large addition to it of those races and peoples who especially come within the field of this Association cannot help but have attracted the attention of every citizen. The immigration problem for many years past has been the problem of reaching and helping the multitudes from Europe who have come through our Eastern seaboard. *The immigration problem of the next hundred years will be the problem of Christianizing the multitudes of Orientals who come in across our Western ocean.* Those who have come from Europe through the gateway of the Atlantic Ocean have been of the Caucasian race, with Christian traditions, and some of them from nations more intelligent and literate than the United States. Many of the great commonwealths of the West, like Minnesota, have been stimulated by this infusion of Norwegian, Swedish and German blood and are at the very forefront in intelligence and moral character in the sisterhood of states because of it. It was and is a question how best to teach these multitudes from Europe. They needed help and do still. Their traditions and history, however, fit them especially for citizenship in the United States, and in the second

generation they merge into the larger citizenship of the nation, are lost in its general population, and contribute elements of strength to our national life.

Now look westward to the immigration problem of the next hundred years. Through the gateway of the Pacific there come not Caucasian, with Christian traditions, but Orientals, with unchristian traditions. And they are coming. That four hundred Hindus should seek entrance to this continent through Canadian ports is no sporadic accident. Back of these four hundred are three hundred million of the same race in India who are pressing against the political and social dykes which they threaten to burst through and flood this and other nations. In an able article by President W. M. Zumbro, of the American College, Madura, India, published in the October *Review of Reviews*, are the following startling statements:

“The world’s political center of gravity is changing. . . . Everywhere in India there is ferment and murmur of discontent. . . . A new nation is being born.” Pres. Zumbro said to me personally in New York, in commenting upon the statements which I have made in this paper:

“You are entirely right; the great problem of the future is the Oriental problem. The problem of immigration from Europe is as nothing when compared with the problem of immigration from the Orient which has already begun to set in.” This is the calm and deliberate statement of a careful Oriental scholar who has lived for many years in India.

That the number of Japanese in our body politic has increased 497 per cent. in the ten years prior to 1900, and probably much more rapidly in the past five, is no accident. These Orientals are simply the skirmish line thrown out in advance of the great army of immigrants who are sure to come to our Pacific shores within the next few years. Those of you who read Dr. William E. Griffis’ prophecy, uttered during the Russo-Japanese War, to the effect that the Pacific and not the Atlantic was to be the great channel of increasing immigration to our nation in the near future, have seen already the verification of this prophecy. Sandlots and restrictive legislation may shut out Chinese immigration. The little olive-skinned man of the Island Nation cannot be shut out by mobs or legislative enactments. The crowds that attacked them at Vancouver recently found that they were loaded not with American whiskey but with Japanese grit, and finally the white men making up the mob retreated from the little brown men whose homes were invaded and whose property was being destroyed. Do you realize it, brethren, the immigration question is changing not

slowly but rapidly, the Pacific Ocean is to be the highway for those who come to us in the future? It is not to educate those of Christian traditions and give them opportunity to carry out the visions of freedom and self-government that beckoned them over the sea, but to recast all the traditions, to remake all the intellectual conceptions, to plant entirely new religious beliefs in the hearts of these brown-skinned people already flocking to our shores. Can we do it? The religion of the Orient and the religion of the Occident are meeting in *our own country!* The battle is on here, now, not with "weapons of carnal warfare," but with those "mighty through God." And the battle will be fought out in this country unless all signs of the times and the pointings of Providence are misread.

In the report of your Executive Committee, no doubt every one was impressed with the information which came from the churches of Seattle. They have appealed to this Association for co-operation and help in the support of a Japanese missionary among the large community of Japanese in that city. Your Executive Committee has voted an appropriation for this purpose and is now in co-operation with the committee of the churches on the Pacific for this work. In the correspondence from Seattle the remarkable fact is stated that "a thirty thousand dollar Buddhist Temple is in process of erection" in that city. The old question, Can America Christianize foreign nations, was vastly important. The new question, How can America best maintain her institutions and Christianize her own great body of unchristian peoples, is absolutely vital. And in this outlook into the work of the A. M. A., it is hard to overestimate the importance of this new and rapidly enlarging field of responsibility, the Immigration Problem of the Pacific.

Turning southward where the great problem of Christian education still lies the importance and encouragement of this work impress us. Misconceptions of the real conditions are sometimes current, and come from superficial investigation. Not long ago an article was published showing that the Negroes were dying out in the South, that the exacting conditions of self-support and the heredity of physical corruption were sweeping them off. Quite the contrary, however, is the fact. Physical health is the basis of race stability. There are racial crises in the history of almost every people. No race in modern times has passed through a more supreme test physically, mentally and morally than has the Negro in our own southern states. This transition period from slavery to freedom is worthy of careful study. No scientist or sociologist can afford to let it pass without exhaustive analysis. The children of Israel passed from bondage to freedom, but they im-

mediately immigrated from the country in which they were bondmen and came under new and enlarged conditions and the absolute direction of their own affairs.

The serfs of Russia were emancipated, but a large number of those who surrounded them were of their own peasant class, who had never been slaves. These freed serfs were also of the same race as their former masters and not differentiated by physical peculiarities that marked them as of the race of former bondmen.

Here in the South we have a race held in bondage for nearly three hundred years, coming into freedom through the shock of war which aroused intense hostility among the great masses of the dominant race. They occupied a region impoverished by war. Could circumstances be harder for a people climbing up out of depressed conditions of physical bondage than this? Suddenly, within an hour, the whole burden of their support and that of their families, provision for table, for clothing, for housing, for tilling of the field, for ingathering of crop, for exchange of products, everything at once falling upon this race of children. And yet this race has met its responsibility. Physically it has not deteriorated nor has the death rate greatly exceeded that of the whites.

Between 1890 and 1900 the native Americans increased 18 8-10 per cent. The Negroes increased 18 1-10 per cent., keeping abreast of the most virile element of American population within 7-10 of one per cent. Prof. Shaler, of Harvard, estimates that at the present rate of increase in the South, as shown by the last forty years, at the close of the present century there will be between sixty and eighty million of Negroes in the United States! Studied from the physical standards, therefore, this problem of the American Missionary Association in the South is increasingly momentous and increasingly encouraging.

Intellectually there is a similar showing. In the southern Atlantic and central states in 1900, the white illiteracy was 11 7-10 per cent. The Negro illiteracy was 48 per cent. The decrease in illiteracy during the decade closing in 1900 stood as follows: Decrease of white illiteracy, 3 2-10 per cent. Decrease of Negro illiteracy, 12 7-10 per cent. The Negroes had gained in the rudiments of education more than three times as rapidly as had the whites in the same section, during the same period.

This, too, is encouraging, and means that the work of the American Missionary Association and kindred organizations has already gained marked success. But we cannot forget that the magnitude of the problem of illiterate Negroes is larger to-day than it was when the race was emancipated. And the importance of enlarging the oppor-

tunities for Christian education among the Negroes is also apparent from facts and statistics. The total number of schools in the South for secondary and higher education is as follows: For whites, 2,759; for Negroes, 253. These statistics do not indicate an over-supply of educational institutions of thorough training for the Negroes. The teachers in the public schools among the colored people in the South are almost entirely Negroes. The demand, therefore, for educational advantages to fit young colored men and women for these positions is apparent.

The economical results of the work of the A. M. A., especially in introducing, as it did, Industrial Training into the schools of the South, are most encouraging. From the bulletins issued from the United States Census Bureau for 1905, we learn facts of peculiar significance along this line.

In twenty-five years covered by the tables, the production of cotton in the United States has increased from 5,755,359 bales to 13,693,279, representing the product of the year. This is a remarkable increase and indicates the efficiency of free labor in the South, as trained in the industrial schools of this Association and other similar organizations.

But passing from the physical, economical, educational needs and encouragements to the religious condition, here, again, we find the two facts standing out prominently, the great need and the encouraging advancement. The religion of this race among whom the Association plants its missions, is becoming increasingly ethical. They still sing from their old-time melodies.

You say you're aiming for the skies,
View the land, view the land,
Why don't you stop your telling lies
And view the heavenly land?

You say your Lord has set you free,
View the land, view the land;
Why don't you let your neighbors be
And view the heavenly land?

This old plantation song contains an intimation that even the slaves on the plantation had some conception of the ethical in religion. But the progress of the Negroes is scarcely imagined.

In a recent campaign in the interests of the A. M. A., it was my privilege to attend several state associations and local conferences. Some of them represented the intelligent and cultivated white churches of our northern fellowship. Others the Negro churches of the South.

I bear my unqualified testimony that in no one of these associations or conferences did I meet a body of men and women who impressed me as more wholesome, devoted, thoughtful or sacrificing than those into whose faces I looked as I stood on the platform of the State Association of Tennessee at Nashville. Shortly afterward it was my privilege to attend an important and significant meeting in the First Congregational Church of Atlanta, Georgia. It was the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of Congregationalism in that stirring metropolis of the South. Although many took part, both of neighboring clergymen and laity, all of whom, with the exception of your secretary, were of the colored race, in dignity, in intellectual grasp and in character, this gathering would size up with the average gathering in any section of the land. And may I say that beside me sat a graduate of Fisk University and of Yale Theological Seminary, an honor man in each, one of the Vice-Moderators of this National Council, conducting the service with wonderful wisdom and dignity, the beloved pastor of the church, our honored brother, Rev. H. H. Proctor, D.D. Under the leadership of such men, and there are many of them, the religious future is assured. What they need to-day is generous and increased help, the pouring out of your sympathy, your prayers, your consecrated gifts to meet the pressing needs and increasing opportunities of this vast field *now*. Not they, but we of the giving constituency, are really on trial to-day. Shall we meet this supreme test during the coming year? Shall we incorporate in our effort the suggestions in the impressive paper read at another session of this meeting by a far-seeing layman that "every church in the country give at least one bumping contribution to the American Missionary Association; that contributing churches make every worthy effort to increase their gifts; that Sunday Schools, Young People's Societies, realizing the value of this work to the youth in the less favored regions of the land, and that individuals with larger resources, add their generous gifts; so that the record-making year just closed shall be only a portent and prophesy of the larger and richer year upon which we enter? Will you, oh brethren, meet this responsibility?

In a book which came from the publishers not long ago, entitled "Abraham Lincoln, the Master of Men," the author seeks to analyze the elements of character which made Lincoln the dominant force even among the strongest men of the nation and the world. The elements of his strength, the author indicates, were not alone his commanding physical presence nor his intellectual power, but were especially his moral earnestness and sincerity and his sterling and dignified character. These were illustrated early in his life and did not wait upon his ad-

vancement. When a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois, at one time he pleaded a case which he won. His partner came to him with the memorandum of his fee, asking him to sign it, and stating that he, the partner, would collect it. Mr. Lincoln looked the items through and remarked, "The amount is too much, I cannot ask it." His partner urged, saying, "Why, Lincoln, you won the case and they are willing to pay anything." "No," said Lincoln, "I cannot ask so much, cut it in two in the middle and bring me the bill and I will sign it, and you can collect." His friend stood hesitating a moment, and said, "Lincoln, you will never make a living in the world." Lincoln turned his great, honest, gray eyes upon the face of his friend, and with the far-away look in them which attracted the attention of every one who saw him afterward, he said, "No, I do not think I ever shall make a living, but do you know that sometimes I feel as though I would rather make a life than to make a living?" *And he made a life!* And all the peoples of the civilized globe fell on their faces in sobbing sorrow when that great life went out from the here into the hereafter.

And so, in conclusion, in the lowlands and highlands of the South, over the prairies of the middle West, in far-away Alaska, along the shores of the western ocean, in our island territories, everywhere among the multitudinous and various peoples that to-day mingle in our own body politic, this Association would bring to every man and woman, to every boy and girl, the chance *to make a life*; a life of safety and advantage to the nation; a life that shall contribute to the progress of the Kingdom of God. If this is worth while, then the work of the American Missionary Association is worth while.