

population almost insures a growing membership. With those labouring in such straitened fields how heartily ought we to sympathize, praying that the want of stimulus such as the centres of population afford, and of encouragement such as increasing numbers give, may be more than made up to them through "the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." And can we do less than see to it, that they are kept free from undue anxiety about temporal provision for their families by enabling the Committee to increase the income received from their congregations to the moderate amount agreed upon by the Assembly as the minimum of stipend?

I am persuaded that the deficiency of last year can easily be met, and the recurrence of it provided against, if Sessions and Boards of Managers will but present the claims of the Fund to their congregations. The necessities of the case appeal to us. The goodness with which God has crowned the year appeals to us. Let me address to you the words long ago indited by the Holy Ghost in regard to a matter similar to this; "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance may also be a supply for your want: that there may be equality." "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart so let him give; not grudgingly, nor of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you."

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

THOMAS WARDROPE.

Moderator of the General Assembly.

Guelph, Sept. 25, 1891.

The different branches of the Presbyterian Church in Japan, co-operate under the name of the "United Church of Christian Japan," which has 94 out-stations, 68 churches, 8,954 communicants, 40 Japanese ministers, 47 Japanese licentiates, 31 schools, 54 theological students, 438 young men and boys in schools, 2,680 young women and girls in schools, total Christians in schools, 704, contributions last year \$13,500.

## Sketches from Palestine.

BY REV. THOMAS CUMMING, TRURO.

### THE PLAIN OF ESDRÆLON.

IN my previous paper on Samaria the unalterable limits to which I was restricted, prevented me from even mentioning several interesting localities which I visited between the modern Arab village of Sebastia and the Plain of Esdrælon, of which I now write. My impressions of Dothan were particularly memorable. The ruins scattered over the mound-shaped hill on which the ancient city stood, were redolent with the memory of Joseph and his brethren, and Benhadad, King of Syria, and Elisha the great prophet of Israel. Like the young attendant of the prophet I could not, in my blindness, see the horses and chariots of fire encompassing the mountain round about. But the perusal of the inspired record of what he saw when his eyes were supernaturally opened, helped greatly to confirm my faith in the grand realities of the spiritual world. Without any supernatural enlightenment, I saw all around, the extensive, fertile fields on which Joseph, after his long, toilsome journey from Hebron, found his brethren keeping their father's flock. I also saw the so-called "Pit," into which Joseph was cast by his brethren. There was plenty of water in it at the time of our visit, though I declined a drink which a fine young Bedouin drew from it and offered to me. But our guide told us that later on in the season, in the heat of summer, it would be dry, as it was when Joseph was cast into it.

The beautiful and euphonious word, "Esdrælon," which stands at the head of this page, is not found in the canonical Scriptures. But it is just the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word Jezreel, which frequently occurs in the historical and prophetic portions of the Old Testament. It is the name given to the great central Plain of Palestine, of which the ancient valley of Jezreel was a prominent part. Embracing, as it now does, the valley of Jezreel, the valley of Megiddo, and other adjacent places mentioned in the inspired narrative, it is a magnificent expanse, situated between the provinces of Samaria and Galilee,