

Two articles in this issue will repay double reading. An able and judicious paper on French work by Rev. C. A. Doudiet, and a vivid pen picture by Julian Hawthorne of plague and famine in India.

#### **"Debt," and giving to the Schemes.**

Two lines of statement are more or less familiar. One is somewhat on this wise: "We have a church debt and must get rid of that. It taxes our strength. It takes all we can give. If we were out of debt we could give to the Mission Schemes, but now we cannot." The other line, more or less insistent at the present time, "We are not in a position to give to the Century Fund, the Common Fund that goes to help the great mission schemes. We must direct our Century efforts to the removal of our own debt. In fact, it is better for the Church that we should do so, for then we will be better able to help the Schemes of the Church." Regarding the above we shall only observe generally, first, that Church debts should be paid as soon as it can be done; second, that a debt, as binding as any, is the one we owe to God for the extension of His Kingdom, and no obligations that would interfere with that debt should, if avoidable, be incurred.

But there is one great fact that should be emphasized in this connection, namely, that as a rule, church debts make very little difference with giving to Mission Schemes. There are exceptions, but for the most part congregations give little more for the schemes of the Church after the debt is paid off than they did before. Where the church debt is made an excuse for not giving to the Schemes there would not be much given if the debt were not there. And judging from the history of the past, congregations, except in a few special cases, that at present decline to give to the Common Century Fund because of church debts, will not materially increase their giving to the Schemes, because of debt removals which they may thereby accomplish.

#### **World's Presbyterian Alliance.**

It is the same age as the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It was organized in the summer of 1875, the year of the Union that formed our Church, and a few days after the latter, so that one of the first acts of our newly united church was to take part in forming the World's Alliance.

The story of that Alliance is in brief as follows: The Protestantism of the world had shown its unity, in the World's Evangelical Alliance, but earnest hearts had longed for some special bond of a closer kind among churches more nearly allied, the Reformed Churches of the world holding the Presbyterian system. Such an Alliance would promote mutual helpfulness, would

enable all to unite in giving aid to the weaker and sometimes oppressed sister churches on the Continent of Europe, besides the advantage of making united influence felt in the world's great moral problems.

Among the earliest to publicly advocate and agitate the idea were President McCosh, of Princeton, and Prof. W. G. Blakie, of Edinburgh.

The negotiations took definite shape in 1875. In the Assemblies and Synods held in May and June of that year in Britain, on the Continent, in the U. S. A., and in Canada, representatives were appointed who met in conference, 21 July 1875, in the English Presbyterian College, London. Sixty delegates were present, representing twenty-one churches, among them the new formed Presbyterian Church in Canada.

At the London Conference the Alliance was formally organized, a constitution adopted, and the first regular Council meeting appointed for Edinburgh the following year, 4 July 1876. This date proved unacceptable to the American Churches, as that was the centennial year of the Declaration of Independence of the U. S. A., and the meeting was postponed to 3 July 1877.

At this first council there were present two hundred and twenty delegates and eighty associates, from forty-three churches.

Since that time the Council has held six meetings, in Philadelphia, Belfast, London, Toronto, Glasgow and Washington.

The Alliance now consists of eighty-six different churches, with some twenty-two millions of Presbyterians.

At the recent Council in Washington, 27 Sept.-6 Oct., Rev. Marshall Lang, D.D., of Glasgow, was president. The opening sermon was preached by Rev. Prof. DeWitt, of Princeton, on "The Attitude of the Reformed Churches towards the Bible," from the words, "Being born, again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever." 1 Peter 1:23.

The following days were filled with papers and discussions on subjects, doctrinal, and practical: "Christian Morality in its Application to Business"; "The Church and Social Questions," "Improvement in Sabbath School Methods," "Foreign Missions," "Home Missions," "The Claims of the English-speaking People on the European Continent, in the British and American Churches," "Sociology," "The Westminster Assembly," "Christian Progress during the 19th Century," etc., etc.

One thing that Canadians will appreciate was the appointment of Principal Caven as President of the Alliance for the next five years. The next meeting of Council is appointed for Liverpool, England, in 1904.