

ARE THE SUNDAY SCHOOLS SUPERFICIAL?

The near approach of the Provincial Sabbath School Association at Hamilton has called attention anew to the question of the alleged superficiality of many Sabbath Schools. It would be a pleasant thing to be able to say that all the Sabbath Schools are well supplied with intelligent and thoughtful teachers; that all teaching is thorough; that the average impression of the hour is strongly and deeply for good. But could this be said truthfully of the average school? Of many it would need in candor to be stated that the exercises are partly flip-pant and partly formal—gliding from the scholars' minds like water from a ducks back; while the brief space for teaching is often filled up perfunctorily by some one to whom the main important truths of the lesson have not become personally vivid. As there is only about one hour per week spent in the Sabbath School, it should be the aim and earnest study of superintendents, officers and teachers to make every minute tell. Personality is important in every position in life, but nowhere more so than in Sabbath School. We wish every success to the Hamilton convention.

We wish that some painstaking observer and truth seeker, says the Interior, would write a book upon the comparative physical well-being of the savage and the civilized races. In one of our great dailies we find a reference to the Fiji Islands written by a well known president of a state university, to the effect that the missionaries greatly improved the social condition of the natives in Tahiti but "shortened their lives by introducing clothing." A man must be singularly blind to patent facts who attributes to "the white man's shirt" instead of to the trader's vices, the decadence of native races in the South Seas. Competent statisticians boldly assert that there were not more Indians upon the American Continent in 1620 than there are today. Explorers upon this continent traveled days and weeks without seeing the slightest evidence of human habitation, as any one may read in the diaries of the Lewis and Clark expedition. It was John Eliot, the first missionary to the Indians in Massachusetts, who wrote, about 1650, that he found consumption carried off more victims among the red men than among the white. In undisturbed possession of this continent, the Indians three hundred years ago numbered between a quarter and a half a million. Civilization has run up the population to eighty millions. The negro multiplies faster in his cabin than in his kraal. English statesmen are already asking anxiously, What shall we do with the increasing population of India? The well clad civilized citizen will out walk, out-fight and out-live the savage every day in the year, and the missionary brings to barbarian races a physical redemption as well as a spiritual one.

TO PRESBYTERY CLERKS.

Presbyteries sometimes change their Home Mission and Augmentation Conveners without notifying the Secretary of these Committees, the Rev. Dr. Somerville, Owen Sound, and, in consequence of this, cheques are sometimes sent to the wrong parties. It is specially requested that every Presbytery Clerk will, on seeing this notice, immediately forward a postal card to Dr. Somerville, giving the name and post office address of the Home Mission Convener and the Augmentation Convener of his Presbytery.

Mr. John Burns, born in London nearly fifty years ago, Radical in politics and representative of labor in Parliament, does not share the pessimistic views of the English press in regard to conditions in London. He has written to The Daily News that to his own knowledge the poor of London are better fed, better clothed and better housed than ever before, and that they certainly are cleaner and more sober. He ascribes the improvement in their condition in no small degree to the pervading influence of the public school, whose teachers and pupils he frequently meets in the parks or at the bathing houses. He says that the London City Council has swept away over 100 liquor saloons and established many small parks within easy reach of the congested districts. Mr. Burns is certainly not by birth or training a eulogist of existing circumstances, so that his testimony may be taken the more readily; and when so prominent a Radical and Democrat ridicules current talk about the physical and moral degeneracy of the English race, the pessimists receive a severe check from an unexpected quarter. If the Old World is on the upgrade, surely the new is not rushing to the pit.

The status of the United Free Church in Scotland has not perceptibly changed since our last report. Both bodies, the Free and the United Free, have sent commissioners throughout the northern parts of Scotland to lay before the people of Highland churches their views of the civil law and Christian duty. The Free, with its two dozen ministers, seem disposed to claim the great university and noble theological seminary at Edinburgh, renouncing to the United Free the minor institutions at Glasgow and Aberdeen. But it is not clear that they have any rights of surrender in the case, even were the others disposed to accept this arrangement. About \$300,000 have been subscribed by the members of the United Free churches to carry on their work, independent of invested funds which are now tied up by the courts. The Assembly of the Established Church has unanimously passed a resolution calling upon all Presbyterians in Scotland to observe the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of John Knox, which anniversary will occur about a year hence, although the precise date of Knox's birth is a subject of considerable dispute. A diary of

general observance will, however, be fixed by common consent of an appropriate committee.

It is now announced that every African tribe from the mouth of the Congo to Stanley Falls, a thousand miles in the interior, has the Bible in its own language. About 9,000 converts are gathered in the various native churches, Christian schools are planted in hundreds of villages and native seminaries for the training of Christian workers are established. There was recently a General Conference of Christian Missionaries at Stanley Pool, and many subjects of interest to all these pioneers of a Christian civilization were discussed in most fraternal spirit. A memorial to King Leopold was adopted asking for some relief to be granted the natives in the matter of oppressive taxation. The principal laborers in this wide stretch of country are American Baptists and Southern Presbyterians. Both churches have done a noble work for these benighted and much oppressed people.

An exhibit which attracts no little attention at the St. Louis Fair is a Sunday-school map of Lawrence County, Missouri. It is hung in the library of the Missouri State Building. It shows every residence in the country, together with the number of persons in each family and their relation to Sunday-schools whether as pupils or teachers. Ninety-five per cent of the people in the country are in some way connected with some Bible school. The map was taken to the World's Sunday School Convention, held last spring in Jerusalem, and naturally was much praised there. Like work in other countries would doubtless result in similar interest in the Sunday-School. The leading political parties have long since canvassed separate communities in this thorough way, but we believe Lawrence County, Missouri, is the first county in the United States to be so canvassed for Christ and his Church.

Literary Notes.

"Found: A Career" is a delightful little story, and the various articles on general topics and also on those more especially of interest to the housekeeper and homemaker go to make up one of the best of the recent numbers of this magazine.

The frontispiece of the October Good House Keeping (Dominion Phelps, Toronto) is worth the price of the magazine. It is one of those delightful sketches of small children in mischief, and the expressions of horror on the little faces are inimitable. Vancouver is the Canadian city described this month, by Julia W. Benshaw, with several good illustrations and ending with Pauline Johnson's toast to that fair city.

"There's wine in the cup Vancouver,
And there's warmth in my heart for you,
While I drink to your health, your youth and
your wealth,
And the things that you yet will do.
"In a vintage rare and olden,
With a flavour fine and keen,
Fill the glass to the edge, while I stand up to
pledge
My faith to my Western Queen."