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THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN,

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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Manager and Editor.

Ottawa, Wednesday, Sept. 11th, 1901.

Rev. W. A. Stewart, M. A., of L'Amable, who for several months so satisfactorily prepared the Young People's Topic for THE DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN, is compelled for a time to give up the work. This important feature of the paper will not be neglected.

Rev. Dr. Moore, of this city presided at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Foreign Mission Board in the Confederation Life Building, Toronto, on Tuesday of last week. Dr. Aggie Turnbull, who has recovered from a period of ill-health will go back to work in India. An ordained missionary will be sent to help the Rev. Wm. Gauld in the Formosa work; and it is hoped that all the Honan missionaries will soon be able to go to work again.

The New York Evening Post says that the custom of having the "blessing" at meals in Christian homes is much on the decline. That, of course ministers have it, but that many Church members and officers of the Church neglect it. The Post evidently is misinformed. There are more devout people in the world than there ever was, and although some omit the "blessing" before meals, we are constrained to believe that there are more who "say grace" and bow around the family altar than ever.

At the Presbyterian offices in Toronto the following cablegram has been received from Dr. McClure of Tientsin, China:—"Now proceeding Honan. Stay uncertain. Writing." Dr. McClure is one of the missionaries of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, who has labored in Honan for a number of years. According to this cablegram, he and the other members of the Canadian staff who did not return to Canada have gone into Honan in the expectation of being able to resume work. The cablegram implies that there is some doubt regarding their continuance. There will probably be another cablegram from Dr. McClure in the course of a few days, intimating whether the state of the country is such as to justify the return of the missionaries who are still in Canada.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

There has been much criticism of the results in the Sabbath School work during recent months. The reports furnished last May are not reassuring, and there has been a disposition to dwell upon the discouraging features of that report. The burden of blame, where blame has been accorded, has been put upon the teacher. This is significant, for the teacher, being a purely voluntary servant, has heretofore escaped criticism. It has been felt that 'twere better to endure a partial good than to deprive ourselves of even its smallest ministrations. But we have grown careless of the possible deprivation in our desire to effect a reformation.

At the recent meeting of the Sabbath School Committee, held in Toronto, a good part of the two days were spent in the most careful consideration of the Sabbath School problem. The same line for reform was followed. "We must have better teaching," seemed to be the watchword of the members of the Committee. The resolutions passed all look in the direction of teacher training. Even the vexed question of the travelling Superintendent, that the Committee was supposed to whip into shape for the Presbyteries, and that we venture to think should have been relegated to the Committee altogether, gave place to this more immediate need.

It is proposed to provide for the training of teachers, by prescribing a course of study, and by providing for the carrying forward of certain class work. During the past year classes were held in the Colleges of the Church, but the great majority are not within reach of the Colleges. Most wisely the Committee seeks to enlist the minister in this work of teacher training. It is quite true that many of the ministers may be themselves in great need of one to teach them what be the principles of true teaching, but if they are in earnest, and our ministers as a class are in real earnest, they will speedily master these principles, and in teaching others will themselves receive benefit. The course chosen will be in the Acts of the Apostles, and we understand that it is the purpose of the Committee on Young People's Societies to cooperate by also choosing a course of study parallel with that chosen by the Sabbath School Committee.

And now it will rest with the ministers and their immediate helpers to make the most of the suggestions of the Committee. The need for action is evident. The members of the Assembly's Committee have done their best to suggest means for meeting the need. Now brethren take hold, and give this matter a fair trial. It may not be just what you would have suggested. Probably it is not what any one member of the Committee would have desired; but it is the result of patient consideration of all the plans presented, and deserves the best treatment at your hands you can give it. Try it, and let us hear results. To this question of Sabbath School work the columns of the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN will always be open. It is one of the great problems with which we stand confronted at present, and if we can assist in the search for the best solution we shall be satisfied. There should be, and if we apply ourselves honestly to the work, there will be a decided improvement in our Sabbath Schools before the next year is out.

TO PRESERVE THE SABBATH.

With an increasing rapidity the question of the preservation of the Sabbath is pressing itself upon the attention of men. The work of The Lord's Day Alliance is beginning to tell. The most valuable part of the work done by that organization has been the unmasking of the greed of those corporations who sought to make money out of the hours set apart for rest. The least valuable has been that part of its work upon which the attention of the public is centred—the effort to enforce and to effect legislation. There is a natural distaste to legal processes. Threaten a man with the law and all that is defiant in him is awakened. He will fight a legal battle to the bitter end. The Lord's Day Alliance has been skillfully forced to appear as a most persistent litigant, and so it has fallen under public disfavor.

Its aim is not to enforce, but to protect and to persuade. As it has become better known, largely through the good work of its Field Secretary, the Rev. J. G. Shearer, the Christian public is beginning to appreciate it at its true value. What is of equal importance is the fact that the sons of labor are beginning to recognize in it one of their best friends, and they are beginning to throw their immense strength into the scale, on the side of the Alliance and its work. The preservation of the Sabbath is the preservation of the day of rest, and the protection of the workman from the rapacity of those corporations who do not scruple to say.... Work for me on the first day of the week, or you shall not work for me at all.

An important advance step has been quietly taken recently in the history of the Alliance. So far there has been an Ontario Alliance, whose work was more or less vigorously prosecuted. In the other Provinces and Territories the Alliances have been somewhat embryonic, and Ontario has been looked upon as a mother rather than a sister organization. There has just been formed a Dominion Alliance, which is really a Federation of all Provincial Alliances. To this Federal Alliance all the Provincial Alliances contribute. It purposes to undertake the Dominion work. It proposes to assume control of the Field Secretary, and Mr. Shearer will become a Dominion official, whose field shall range from Vancouver to Cape Breton. Each of the Provinces will undertake and prosecute its own peculiar work, but triennially representatives of the Provincial and Territorial Alliances will meet in council, and consider the interests of the work all have in common.

The work of the Alliance has staunch supporters among men who hold responsible positions. In several instances the Mayor of the town is the President of the local branch of the Alliance, and in more than one instance this fact has stood the people in good stead. In many other places the chief magistrate of the town is in hearty sympathy with the movement, and does not hesitate to act for the preservation of the rest day. Excellent examples have been recently given in Collingwood, in St. John, in Orillia, and in Barrie, of the power of properly informed and aroused public opinion to preserve the day from the rapacity of men who would destroy it for the sake of commercial gain. Keep the work going quietly, but persistent