

THANKSGIVING.

What does Thanksgiving day really mean? The original idea was the assembling of the people in their places of worship throughout the land, in order to unite in giving thanks to the Giver of all good for the mercies and blessings bestowed upon the country and the people during the year, and to manifest that gratitude in a tangible way by gifts to religious or philanthropic objects. That was genuine thanksgiving, worthy of a Christian nation, the day itself being regarded by the majority of people in a religious light rather than in the light of a holiday. In the olden times there was a general cessation of work in city, town and country, and the attendance at places of worship was almost uniformly large.

Things have changed considerably. We have got away from the original idea of thanksgiving day. A handful of worshippers who conscientiously regard national thanksgiving as the duty and the privilege of a professedly Christian people, assemble in their places of worship to render thanks and praise to the loving and merciful Ruler of the universe, while the large majority regard the day in the light of a holiday; and sports—not infrequently with undesirable accompaniments—take the place of praise and prayer; and expenditure of money in very unprofitable ways takes the place of contributions to religious and philanthropic objects. The few remember the poor and the many waste their money in ways that too often contribute to the growth of poverty. Such methods of observing thanksgiving day are little better than solemn mockery; they are utterly at variance with the original and worthy idea of national thanksgiving, and they can in no sense be regarded as acceptable to the Giver of all Good who has a right to the reverent homage of his dependent creatures as acknowledgement of the blessings individual and national, which he has bestowed upon them.

Of holidays we have more than enough for the good of the people, even of the so called toiling masses, without diverting the day from its original intention. We submit this is a matter to which the pastors of Christian churches and the people of Christian denominations might well give their earnest attention. If thanksgiving day cannot be restored to the original purpose for which it was designed—prayer and thanksgiving; if it is simply to be a rollicking holiday, then, in the view of not a few, it becomes a question whether such a travesty on national thanksgiving had not better be abandoned, leaving to the various denominations to act in concert in promoting a return of the people to genuine thanksgiving.

The attention of our readers is directed to an advertisement headed "Important to Investors," introducing the "Sun Savings and Loan Company of Ontario," which has now been doing a successful business for many years. This Company has attained a sure footing among the solid moneyed institutions of the country, and we can confidently recommend it to those who desire a safe investment. Mr. W. Pemberton Page, the Managing Director, is a gentleman of large experience, and his co-directors bring to the management of this Company much business ability and wide knowledge of financial operations.

Social Worship.

Rev. Dr. Heridge, Convener of the Special Committee on Aids for Social Worship, calls the attention of Presbyteries and the Church at large to the deliverance of the last General Assembly in Ottawa, on the Manual submitted by the Committee as follows:—

RESOLVED:—"That the Committee be instructed to complete the revision of the Manual and to submit it to the next General Assembly for its approval."

As the duty and the desire of the Committee is to increase the usefulness and acceptance of the Manual, Presbyteries and individual Ministers, Elders, Members or other persons, are invited to communicate with the Convener, pointing out what changes or emendations, if any, they may deem desirable.

A copy will be sent free by the Publishers, The Westminster Co., Limited, Toronto, to any person so desiring, on receipt of two postage stamps (4 cents) to cover cost of mailing. This offer will hold good during December.

The Ontario branch of the Dominion alliance has addressed a personal circular to all friends of the prohibition cause, appealing for the co-operation on these two lines of effort: (1) The securing of wisely framed and thoroughgoing legislation, effectively embodying the strongly expressed desire of the people. (2) The election of such representatives as can be relied upon to fearlessly support the enactment and enforcement of such legislation. The circular urges organization in churches and societies.

Literary Notes.

"The Modern Priscilla," for December comes with many helpful hints for the holiday season. The article on the making of various Christmas presents will be of great interest and value to those needing suggestions about gifts for this season.—The Priscilla Publishing Co., Boston, Mass.

The December Ladies' Home Journal is a very attractive issue of that popular monthly. The number opens with a child's story called "The People who help Santa Claus". Several good Christmas stories follow, and "The Russell's in Chicago" by Emily Wheaton is the new serial. There are some pathetic stories of "The Other Side of the Town" by Rev. David M. Steele, and an account of the Sistine Madonna done in needlework will be found interesting. Several pages are devoted to illustrations and articles on the Christmas season. The publishers promise a rich and varied program for the coming year.—The Curtis Publishing Company, Philadelphia.

The British Monthly, an Illustrated Record of Religious Life and Work, is a magazine we can heartily commend to our readers. In its handsome pages are happily blended the serious and entertaining; while the illustrations are numerous and well executed. The number before us, that for October, contains, among others, articles on "Types of Temptation: Some Scripture Promises," by Professor H. C. G. Moule, D.D.; "Purified Unto Love," by Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A.; "Sunday Reading a Generation Ago," by Claudius Clear; illustrated articles on "The Methodist Ecumenical Council" and "The Coming Church Congress at Brighton." Then there are continued stories by

David Lyall and Amy Le Feuvre; and the "Home Department" and "Children's Corner." The quality of paper and printing leave nothing to be desired. We could wish to see this sterling periodical take the place of a lot of the trashy magazines at present so widely read in our country. The British Monthly is edited by Dr. Robertson Nicoll and copies may be ordered from the Upper Canadian Tract Society, Toronto.

The December number of Harper's Magazine is a very handsome one, with a dark red leather cover, and containing a large amount of excellent reading. It opens with a story by Maurice Hewlett, entitled "The Heart's Rye," illustrated with four quaint colored drawings. There are also stories by Mark Twain, Sarah Orne Jewett, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Bret Harte, and others. A most interesting feature is "New Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson," with introduction, note and comment, by Horace Townsend. An article which is illustrated most delightfully is that by Edward S. Martin on "Other People's Children." Harper's Magazine opens a new year which should be a most successful one, as the prospectus shows that the contributions are to be even of a higher degree of excellence than heretofore.—Harper and Brothers, New York.

The Man from Glengarry, a Tale of the Ottawa, by Ralph Connor. While we cannot agree with the majority of critics who say that this is stronger than either "Black Rock" or "The Sky Pilot," there is no doubt that the latest work of Ralph Connor will be widely read. "The Man from Glengarry" is a powerful and moving story of the life of the farmers and lumbermen of Canada in the early fifties. The opening chapter is a most effective one, describing a fight among the opposing forces of two rival lumber camps. The hero, Randal MacDonald, is a fine character whose struggle for the things a man must retain to keep his manhood excites the admiration of the reader. His father and uncle are also strong and typical characters of men. We cannot say as much for the women, who are rather colorless and weak, though in this statement we certainly do not include Mrs. Murray, the wife of the minister, who is quite ideal. Logging, rafting, sugaring-off, a wake, a revival—all are features of this book which give it the distinctly Canadian tone so desirable in the writings of a Canadian author. William Briggs, Toronto.

The London Missionary Society has just completed the erection of a \$10,000 building at Leone, Tutuila, which is to be used as a school for Samoan girls. Every cent of this money has been given by the natives, one island alone—Olusina—donating \$2,000 out of the \$3,000 it raised last year by the cultivation of coconuts, the only money-yielding product of the place, and thus without reducing in any single instance the salaries of the native pastors!

In the C. M. S. from Month to Month for September attention is called to the steadily increasing number of missionaries sent out from the various countries to which British colonists have gone; and a partial list of 40 is given, including 10 to India, 14 to China, 9 to Palestine and Persia, 5 to Africa, and 2 to Japan. By far the larger portion are sent forth by the churches of Australia.