

the *bona fides* of the writers from being gravely called in question, while the coarse and persistent efforts at blackening the characters and belittling the intellects of political opponents are, in a very great number of instances, not more offensive for their curious and defiant outrages upon all the ordinary laws and usages of the English language, than they are for their antagonism to simple decency and the very first elements of truthfulness. Of course a good deal has to be allowed for excited feeling and blind partisanship, but, after all has in this respect been granted that well can be, there remains a very formidable residuum which can be put down as nothing but deliberate, conscious and defiant falsehood. Surely this is not as it ought to be. It may impose upon those at a distance from the scenes and occurrences professedly described, but it cannot even do that for any length of time. Naturally, and very reasonably, people even in the heat of a contested election begin to reason from what they know and have themselves seen and heard, to what they learn only from reports, and conclude that if the facts are different from the representations in the former instances, the likelihoods are all in favour of the same being the case in the latter. The consequence is that newspaper reports are being very generally discredited all round. Surely this is matter for deep regret, and the course which is leading up to this must be as bad policy as it is execrable in morals. It used to be said of old Gordon Bennett, of the New York "Herald," that when he came down to the office of a morning and found nothing sensational really stirring, he would say to some of his staff, "Kill a man, kill a man," and a man was accordingly frequently killed in the columns of the "Herald" without any blood having been shed, or any violence done to anything but truth. Canadian newspapers are surely not ambitious of rivalling such "enterprising" and defiant Munchausenism. A rather clever Canadian journalist, now for a considerable time dead, used to remark that Canadian newspaper readers required "strong meat" in the way of very vigorous nouns and denunciatory adjectives, and that moderate writing would always be regarded as essentially weak and ineffective. In a good-natured way he likened the general taste in this respect to that of inveterate dram drinkers, who prefer something strong and fiery to take them by the throat, and look upon undrugged liquor as fit only for milk-sops and babies. We had thought that such a condition of the public taste, if it ever existed, had become a thing of the past; but facts seem to indicate that there is still too much of it to be met with—at least if we may draw any conclusion from the abundant supply of a certain article which it is to be supposed would not be produced unless it were correspondingly in demand. It surely cannot be a fact that all our public men are on the one hand either idiots or knaves, or on the other demigods come down to this earth in the likeness of men, and waiting only for a short season till they again take their flight to their native heavens. Buncombe, whether laudatory or the reverse, is all very well, and possibly in the present state of things more or less inevitable; but surely it is well when it is kept within certain bounds of apparent decency and verisimilitude. In the meantime it does not give a very encouraging view of the prevalence and fervour of Christianity when such things are possible.

"BAPTISM IMPROVED."*

This is a timely and earnest appeal. The author opens by calling attention to the fact that a very large number of the young people of the Church are living in disregard of the ordinances of Church membership. He traces this chiefly to the home, showing that the great cause of the indifference is the want of family religion, and that want he attributes to a false view of the relation of children to the Church. Mr. Mackay finds the fulcrum of his argument in the ordinance of infant baptism, and the responsibility of parents is dwelt upon in a manner well fitted to awaken emotions of anxiety and tender solicitude. I wish every parent in the Church could read it.

The book, however, is wider than its name. As is evident from the statement on page 16, "What we want is a thorough revival of religion by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit." And the fact that by so many parents the ordinance of baptism is observed outwardly, while its spiritual significance is disregarded, and its solemn

* BAPTISM IMPROVED. By the Rev. W. A. Mackay, Woodstock, Ont.

vows are violated, is urged only too truly as an evidence of our need of such a revival. On page 17 he says, "Baptism does not originate the obligation." No! the obligation springs from the relation of the Christian to his God. And indifference in regard to vows taken upon him at the baptism of his child is conclusive evidence of a low state of spiritual life. Other duties, in which natural affection does not plead so powerfully, and from the neglect of which the consequences are less apparent, will be at least equally disregarded. The warning is needed, and Mr. Mackay has spoken faithfully.

There is no more pressing question before us than that of Home Religion, and perhaps nothing can be brought to bear so effectively as the relation which Christian parents hold to their children before God, who has given them very precious promises, and laid His loving and express commands upon them.

G. BRUCE.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

OLIPHANT'S STORIES FOR THE YOUNG. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; Toronto: N. Ure & Co.)—As samples of this series, we have now before us two capital stories in paper covers—"Fergus Morton, a Story of a Scottish Boy," by J. R. Macduff, D.D., and "Nannette's New Shoes, an Edinburgh Story," by Robina F. Hardy.

MOODS. By Louisa M. Alcott. (Boston: Roberts Brothers; Toronto: Willing & Williamson. Price \$1.50.)—Miss Alcott has written many books since "Moods" first appeared. It was her first story, and it is now republished with additions, omissions, prunings and other emendations. Its aim is to show the mistakes of a moody nature, guided not by principle but by impulse.

THE WHITE SUNLIGHT OF POTENT WORDS. By Rev. John S. MacIntosh, D.D. (Philadelphia: National School of Elocution and Oratory.)—The twenty-one pages of this cloth-bound pamphlet contains an oration on Elocution, delivered before the National School of Elocution and Oratory upon the occasion of its eighth annual commencement, held in Philadelphia on the 14th of June, 1881.

BITS FROM BINKBONNY, OR BELL O' THE MANSE. A Tale of Scottish Village Life between 1841 and 1851. By John Strathesk. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; Toronto: N. Ure & Co.)—This handsome volume of 300 pages contains what is confessedly a work of the imagination, but is at the same time, in a sense, truthful, as representing Scottish life and character with some degree of faithfulness. The book is nicely illustrated with engravings from original sketches, among which is an excellent one of Dumbarton rock and castle.

THE BEST OF CHUMS; and other Stories. By Robert Richardson, B.A. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; Toronto: N. Ure & Co.)—Besides that which supplies the title, this book contains five stories, viz. "Karl, the Foster Son;" "Grandfather's Pipe;" "Going for the Doctor;" "Ernest's Wonderful Night;" "Uncle Ben and the Smugglers." They are full of wonderful adventure, and will be eagerly read by those young people into whose hands they fall, while at the same time they are wholesome in tone and tendency, and well fitted not only to amuse but to instruct.

ONESIMUS. Memoirs of a Disciple of St. Paul. By the Author of "Philochristus." (Boston: Roberts Brothers; Toronto: Willing & Williamson. Price \$1.50.)—The author of this book throws the charm of exquisite polish over everything that comes from his hand. The present work may be described as a religious romance on a basis of historic probability. Everything that is actually known of Onesimus is woven with wonderful skill into a narrative which presents a complete biography of the man, and a clear view of the thought and opinion current in his day. The author describes his hero as of noble parentage, but brought into slavery through his being exposed on the temple steps by a malignant nurse. In his childhood he sees the Apostle Paul at Lystra, and receives a glance and a blessing which he never forgets. After many adventures and the endurance of much brutal treatment as a slave, he once more falls in with the apostle, becomes his disciple, labours in the Lord's vineyard as a bishop, and ultimately suffers

a triumphant martyrdom in the Roman arena. Without settling himself directly to the task, the writer of this book very plainly shows the worthlessness of the claims advanced in favour of the purity and sufficiency of the philosophical paganism prevalent at the dawn of Christianity.

THE LIFE EVERLASTING WHAT IS IT? WHENCE IS IT? WHOSE IS IT? By J. H. Pettingell, A.M. (Philadelphia: J. D. Brown, 506 Minor street.)—This is a goodly volume of 760 pages, containing also a so-called symposium, which gives the opinions of some twenty prominent men in America and Europe on the subject discussed in the work. The book is a good collection of the arguments commonly advanced in support of conditional immortality, but throws no new light on the subject. The author seems to think that the "traditional error" that we are spiritual beings having bodily organizations, and continue to exist after the body perishes, owes its origin to Plato. It never seems to occur to him that Plato is only one far-seeing, serious soul among thousands who gave voice to the deep convictions which are in every man that he exists, and that his body is not the higher self. The attempt to overthrow Plato is in vain. "To be or not to be" after death, that is the question. The sum of the doctrine of the book seems to be that through sin man became "subject to death;" Christ came to "procure life for His people;" all men must die, and by "a miraculous resurrection live again;" then those "who are found worthy of eternal life" receive eternal life: the rest "are destroyed with an everlasting destruction." This is, Conditional Immortality for those who are found worthy, and Annihilation for the rest. The hinge of the controversy is the meaning of Life and Death. The book shows much patient research and good argument; but it cannot be satisfactory or convincing to any who hold the old-fashioned psychological and theological first principles.

KNOX COLLEGE.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you please state in your next issue that no report was ever published by the Board of Knox College, stating that the debt on the Building Fund was paid up? The statement by your correspondent, "A Patient Watcher," cannot refer to any official report, as none to this effect was made.
Toronto, June 10th, 1882. WM. BURNS.

SYNOD OF THE MARITIME PROVINCES.

The Synod of the Maritime Provinces met in St. James' Church, Charlottetown, P.E.I., on Tuesday, the 30th ult., and was opened with an appropriate sermon by the Rev. Prof. Pollok. One hundred and fifty delegates were present. Rev. Principal McKnight, of the Theological College, Halifax, was elected Moderator for the ensuing year, and on assuming the chair delivered an eloquent address on "The Mission Field, Home and Foreign."

The reports on Mission work, colleges, etc., were considered, and able addresses were delivered by Drs. Macrae, McCulloch, and by Rev. Messrs. Sedgwick, Burgess, Hogg, and others.

Mr. E. D. Miller reported from the Committee on the "Supplementary Scheme." It was moved that the report be remitted to a committee, with instructions to consider our present Supplementary Scheme, the one now submitted, and also that submitted by the General Assembly, and report their views either for the continuance of the present scheme or the adoption of a new one. It was moved in amendment that this Synod, while fully alive to the importance of adequate ministerial support, yet as the General Assembly is taking action in the matter, the Synod for the present deem it inexpedient to make any change, and recommend the present scheme to the liberality of our people. The amendment was carried by a considerable majority.

The Synod adjourned, to meet in Fort Massey Church, Halifax, on the second Tuesday in October, 1883.

We are in receipt of a very fine portrait of the late Dean Grasett. The engraver has done his work well; the impression is faultless, and competent judges pronounce the likeness accurate. Copies can be procured on application to the business manager of the "Evangelical Churchman," P.O. Box 2502, Toronto. The price is one dollar.