

these new districts, by purchasing suitable sites for churches, and helping in their erection before values increased, and before the people had drifted away from ordinances. While occupying a charge in Baltimore Dr. Marquis observed that a number of his congregation went to reside in a new district. These residents had, many of them, an attachment by association and otherwise to the Church where they had been long accustomed to worship, but they ceased to be regular in their attendance, and they no longer continued to take an active part in congregational work, and the young people were forming ecclesiastical associations elsewhere. The proposed solution of the difficulty was that a church should be erected in the new district. For this the people themselves were unable, and the effort was greater than the parent congregation could accomplish. What individuals and a single congregation could not do, the combined effort of the other congregations rendered an easy task, and the result was gratifying to all concerned.

The outcome of the enterprise was the formation of a permanent alliance. The payment of a small annual fee entitled anyone connected with any of the congregations to become a member. In addition to this, some of the revenue funds were provided by collections and individual subscriptions. The members annually elected eleven directors, most of them prominent business laymen, to whom was entrusted the entire business of the association. They were entitled to purchase property, hold and expend moneys, and assume all responsibilities. They at once set to work in a judicious way, confining their attention to the most urgent cases, and extending their operations as fast and as far as the means at their disposal would permit.

The Baltimore Alliance has been in existence twelve years. During that time, they raised and expended about \$100,000, with which they have built four new self-sustaining Churches in the city, and two in the suburbs, with an aggregate membership of 1,167, and a Sabbath school attendance approaching 3,000; while previously existing congregations, with one exception, were stronger than when the movement was commenced.

This co-operative method of church extension is certainly most commendable. It is plain, simple and practicable. In all times and large towns it is a necessary work. The success attending the experiment elsewhere shows what can be achieved by combined and intelligent efforts. What has been so well done by American Presbyterians would not prove a failure in the hands of their Canadian co-religionists.

Books and Magazines.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.)—In excellence and adaptation for its special class of readers this little monthly is unrivalled.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.)—To all desirous of keeping abreast of the current philosophic, scientific and literary thought of the time, this weekly magazine is simply indispensable.

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.)—This favourite monthly for youthful readers deservedly occupies a high place in popular esteem. It continues to supply pure, instructive and entertaining reading, accompanied by numerous and artistic engravings to a steadily increasing circle of readers.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—Young people who have the privilege of seeing this publication weekly are not exposed to the danger of contracting a habit for injurious reading. It is fitted by its excellent matter and no less excellent illustrations to instruct, entertain and refine the minds of its readers.

THE ENGLISH ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE. (New York: Macmillan & Co.)—The *Engl. Illustr.* this month appears as a handsome double number, with nine full page and any number of smaller illustrations, many of them very beautiful and finely finished. The opening paper, descriptive of Venice, with its copious and excellent engravings, is peculiarly attractive. Among other papers of interest may be specified, "In the Heart of London," with numerous realistic illustrations. The publishers resolved to make a superb number for Christmas, and they have succeeded.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Harper Brothers.)—The December number of *Harper's Magazine* excels even its own high precedents as a Christmas feast of rich attractions. It is undoubtedly the most sumptuous number that has yet been issued, and marks the acme of artistic and literary bounty in the periodical world. A specially holiday tone prevails throughout. Nearly half of the sixty cuts are full page, and four are printed on plate paper. The regular serials are omitted to provide larger space for the Christmas features. Every article and story is complete in itself. A striking story, "The Boyhood of Christ," from the pen of General Lew Wallace, author of "Ben Hur," is sure to attract attention. A great variety of short stories, poems, illustrations and the usual departments make up a splendid Christmas number.

THE CENTURY MAGAZINE. (New York: The Century Co.)—The number for December is a splendid one. The elaborate work, the life of Lincoln, progresses most interestingly. Scarcely less interesting are the reminiscences of Henry Clay, of whom there are no fewer than three portraits illustrating the article. There is also a striking paper with five illustrations on "Contemporary French Sculpture." "Old Chelsea" abounds in interesting literary facts and illustrations. An article entitled a "Little Millerite" is sure to attract attention. The war papers deal mainly with the battle of Gettysburg. Mr. Howells' serial ends, and F. R. Stockton's progresses. "The Union of American Churches" is the subject on which Rev. George R. Crooks, D.D., writes. There is much else, including some good poetry that will be found attractive, in the present number.

SABBATH LESSONS FROM WESTMINSTER. By Rev. John Sinclair, Edinburgh. (Edinburgh: James Thin; Toronto: James Bain & Son.)—The idea of this volume is a very good one, and is so far a novelty, for while the different "Lessons" will be found greatly helpful in preparation for teaching in the Sabbath school, they are specially intended for "stimulating meditation and devotion" by private reading. In this respect they will be found peculiarly useful. The Shorter Catechism, as a compend of religious truth, could not easily be surpassed. It has long stood the test, and no superior to it has as yet been found or is likely to be. We trust these "lessons" will lead many to appreciate more fully its excellence and to avail themselves more generally of its instruction. We cordially commend Mr. Sinclair's work to Canadian readers.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.)—Over the signature of Harvard B. Rooke is "The Strange Story of Pragyna," a most interesting and thrilling study of Eastern occult science. A paper by the late Elijah Melford, on "The Object of a University," is a scholarly consideration of the subject. Miss Harriet Waters Preston has an amusing and carefully-thought-out criticism on "The Church of England Novel"; and Edmund Noble contributes a travel paper, "Up the Neva to Schlusselburg," which is of rather unusual interest. The two political papers in the number are an account of Mazzini as a man and a statesman, by Maria Louise Henry, and an article on "the Dream of Russia." A long poem by Helen Gray Cone, entitled "Madonna Pia," is charming in its way; and there is also some remarkably good verse from Louise Imogen Guiney and Julia C. R. Dorr. Miss Murfree concludes her serial, "In the Clouds," and Mr. Bishop brings "The Golden Justice" to a termination. Some criticisms and the Contributors' Club complete this number. There is a supplement containing Dr. Holmes' Harvard poem, and J. Russell Lowell's oration at the recent celebration of the 250th anniversary of that institution. The number, taken as a whole, is an unusually good one.

At a meeting of Edinburgh City Mission, Dr. MacGregor said it was their first duty to save the heathen at home, and then those abroad. City missionaries were required, partly because of the great overlapping of agencies, owing to the senseless religious divisions in the Presbyterian Church. He hoped to see the day when they would all be one. Why should not Dr. Whyte, and Dr. Muir, and Dr. Walter Smith, preach to the poor instead of to the well-to-do? If they were one, as they ought to be, the poor would be better attended to than they were, and as the poorest had the highest medical skill at their disposal, so they ought to have the highest ministerial skill also.

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

THE CLAIMS OF THE MISSION CAUSE.

What can we do more than we are doing at the present for Foreign Missions? I believe we all desire to do more. We have come to feel that an active interest in the cause should not be confined to one or two enthusiastic members of our congregations, but must be distributed over the whole body of the people.

I. We must have more prayer. That is the primary need. I say so for three reasons.

The first is that all spiritual revival begins with prayer. This is true of a revived interest in missions. How can we be quickened except in answer to the cry, "Quicken Thou me, O Lord, according unto Thy word." The second reason is that, when we are fulfilling this duty to any case, every other is bound to follow. We cannot continue praying for it without being led to do our duty by it all round. The conscious insincerity, when we are not following up prayer by using every means in our power to advance the object, will soon compel us to drop it from our petitions. We shall wince when we draw near it at the throne of grace unless we are keeping it in mind at other times and in other ways. We shall not be able to lift up our voices to God with strength. The other neglected duties which we owe to the cause will choke our petitions. In the end we shall either give up praying altogether, or we shall become restless and dissatisfied till we go and do the things which we have left undone. Let us keep missions to the front in our prayers, and very soon they will come to the front likewise in our practical interest and effort. A third reason for the precedence I have given to prayer is that it is what above all other things our missionaries need to strengthen their hands and to ensure prosperity to their labours. It is prayer that rouses God from His rest, and brings down into the field the decisive forces of the Spirit. "Awake, awake, put on Thy strength, oh arm of the Lord!" It is by His people besieging His throne with that cry that He is stirred to come to the help of His servants. If you were to ask our missionaries what they want most from the Churches at home, what would be their reply? It would not be our sympathy. It would not be our money. It would not be—no, not even that would come first—our sons and our daughters as their fellow labourers. I believe it would be our prayers. And that not only because these would secure all the others, but because they would bring down the Lord Himself in more of the fulness of the Spirit. Our missionaries believe in the power of prayer. It is their inspiration and their strength. It wins for them the indispensable alliance of the Most High. As one of themselves recently told me, there are times when they are well-nigh overwhelmed by a sense of loneliness, and when the thought that so many at home are keeping them in remembrance at the throne of grace revives their spirits, and nerves them anew for their labours.

II. We must seek an intelligent and definite acquaintance with the past history and present operations of missions. We must adopt rational means to foster our interest in them. Now, how much missionary literature have we in our homes? And what place does it hold in our reading? Missionary histories, biographies and magazines ought to have the place of honour in the literature of our households. We should make such reading the first ourselves. We should teach our children to make it the first. We should make them feel that we reckon an interest in missionary intelligence above all proficiency in learning and all distinction in their schools or universities. We should inspire them with reverence for our missionaries, as our greatest and noblest men. We should encourage them to seek the fascination which they so often find in fiction and romance, in the real heroism of those good soldiers of Jesus Christ, who have jeopardized their lives in the high places of the field. We should train them to look forward to a meeting where a missionary is to appear and give an account of his labours as the greatest treat that can be afforded them in this world.

III. We can follow up our prayers at the mission box. We can support the cause with our silver and our gold. The Church cannot send out the men without money. We have to thank God that at the present moment there is no lack of men. The announcement that such a large number of our students have volunteered for India and other fields must have sent a thrill of satisfaction and gladness through the length and breadth of the Church. Would it be to the honour of the Church, that when men are ready, the means should not be forthcoming—that we should have to say to any one of them, "You must stay at home because our funds are exhausted?" That never happened yet in the history of our Church, and by the grace of God it never will. The rising tide of missionary enthusiasm, which has led so many to offer their personal services for the foreign field, will also bring the means to support them.