

gathering. We intruded ourselves among the brethren that we might say a word regarding our new venture in the semi-monthly form; and received right truly a brother's welcome. The gathering was marked by a thoroughly fraternal spirit, good sense, and a desire to be helpful in the general work. A slight ruffle of the New Theology meeting the old appeared—where does it not appear just now? and we know of no fairer field upon which these too often contrary phases of thought, can meet in friendly counsel and co-operation than in the free air of our Congregational Associations. The only drawback to the meeting was the absence of so many brethren. Several representatives from the churches were present, and added much by active participation to the interest and the worth of the gathering. "As thou sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." These Association meetings do much to stimulate thought, and to bind friend to friend in loving unity. We went home stronger, wiser, and refreshed. Brethren, do not allow these gatherings to fall away.

RETURNING from Guelph we found a letter from the respected pastor of the Barrie church, to which we refer for the "pointing of a moral." This young and vigorous church has been a centre of Christian influence in the town, especially manifest to those who weigh rather than number. It has reached the closing months of the third year of its existence. The novelty of the start has worn off, surrounding churches have been stimulated to fresh exertions, and the burden begins to press, especially under the general depression of material interests. For a season our brethren seemed to lose hope, though never were the energies of church life more active, or pastoral relations more tender. But prayer rose to praise and our friends have girded themselves afresh for works of faith and labours of love. Isa. xl. 29, 30, 31 may be read here as having been verified in experience by the friends at Barrie.

THE moral. For a moment they seemed discouraged. The strongest and most hopeful are not free from such influences, nay, are specially open to them; and the sense of isolation our churches feel deepens the gloom. How cheery at such moments to feel the pre-

sence of a sympathetic hand. We need very much, more intercommunion. Distance and expense stand in the way, but the very causes that make difficult are voices crying for the same. "Distance makes the heart grow fonder" is a proverb of very doubtful truthfulness; we take a deeper interest in those we see and hear. To come to prosaic actuality: interchange of pulpits, friendly deputations, association meetings, correspondence in these columns, all should be encouraged, and thus, with Mr. Hall's cheery visits and letters, we shall find ourselves a band of brothers, and the grim shadow of loneliness and discouragement will disappear in the genial light of Christian union.

WE have again had the privilege of being present at the closing exercises of the College, Thursday 9th inst., as also at the meeting of the Board and Faculty, and of the Executive of the Missionary Society. We purpose to give some general impressions, leaving details for the most part aside, and first regarding the Missionary Society: There is every prospect of a deficiency this year in the funds, arising from the fact that the work is spreading, and therefore the demands increasing. We are sowing; until time is given for growth we must seem the poorer. Besides, the general commercial depression is not without its effect. Nevertheless the Western, Toronto, is following the good example Ottawa set some time ago, and has given up its missionary grant. We are hoping to see others speedily follow. Speaking generally, we would say our difficulties are by no means past, but we are surmounting them hopefully. One fact is to be now borne in mind. The time is coming when the efforts of our Superintendent will have to be concentrated more, and churches with their pastors learn to carry on their missionary enterprises without waiting for his visits. As of old, neighbouring pastors may associate together in the work, and conduct successfully their own meetings. The next three months Mr. Hall has been directed to spend in the new field of St. Thomas; and in "prospecting" another promising field not far away. One of the students has generously placed himself at the committee's disposal to assist in these duties. Churches must accept the new departure, and not allow their interest to decline because