

ing the franchise to women, and of raising the age of consent to twenty-one years. The report of the membership in the Dominion gave the number at 10,000. Miss Slack stated there were 100,000 members in Britain, and Mrs. Wilson, of Buffalo, gave the numbers in the United States at 300,000, and all testified to the interest increasing and spreading.

There was a time when the W.C.T.U. was laughed at, good men did not feel it beneath them to poke fun at it, or make it a target for a sneer. Miss Willard was rather too officious and managing, and assumed a place which should have been left to a man. These days are passed and silenced now is every sneer. A cause which has spread so fast, and which is reaching out to every land with designs of mercy and love, pity and kindness, whose watchwords are, "For God and home and country," which makes for and is on the side of righteousness, which has now enrolled in its membership hundreds of thousands of the best and brightest Christian women in every land, and is constantly adding more, no wise or good man will laugh at, and for the foolish it need not care. That great army of women is full of enthusiasm; they really believe in their cause, and they are officered and led by women whose organizing faculty and executive ability are of the highest order and fit to govern an empire. What is there can possibly stand against them? They are full of courage and of that faith in their cause, and more, in God, which laughs at difficulties and triumphs over impossibilities. The battle is not theirs, but God's, and it is bound to end in a victory which will be a help to every good cause and bring unspeakable blessing with it to every land. We bid to this cause and everyone engaged in it, God-speed.

#### RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

THIS subject, for which there appears to be no rest, is again brought into public notice by a large deputation of Anglican clergymen and laymen which lately waited upon the Ontario Government to urge upon it "the necessity of setting apart regular hours for religious instruction in the Public Schools." It is unfortunate that a deputation upon such a matter should have consisted solely of representatives of the Anglican Church. This, however, we suspect, was not the fault of the Anglican Church or of the deputation. It is impossible not to sympathize with the views of the deputation as to the great importance of the subject of religious instruction, but whether in the Public Schools or not is an open question, and to respect their earnestness. Difficulties were confessed to be in the way of carrying into effect their request, and we are struck with the readiness of the deputation to roll these over upon the Government, and their simple confidence that it, and especially the Minister of Education, would find a way out of difficulties by which, after years of discussion and experiment, older countries than ours are still perplexed and baffled.

The religious instruction asked for contemplates the use of the Scriptures as a text book, and "a catechism which should start at Genesis and go through the whole teachings of the Bible;" also that "half an hour of the school day should be devoted to religious instruction." This means, the deputation explained, instruction, properly so-called, in the Scriptures and catechism, including note and comment, and necessarily the expression of opinions by the teacher upon the portions of Scripture to be studied and the doctrines taught in the catechism. Few if any Christian parents, we should suppose, would object to half an hour of the school day being devoted to a thing so important as the planting and grounding of their children in the knowledge of religious truth. A vast number of parents, however, are not religious, and they would certainly have a right to be heard in this matter. Meantime let that pass.

What this deputation asked for brings up for consideration of the whole of that most knotty question, whether the State is called upon at all to engage through its servants in the work of religious instruction, and if so, how far? One of the deputation having settled this question for himself, "wished to see the teaching of religion made obligatory in the schools." The primary responsibility for the religious instruction of the child, it will be admitted, will always rest upon the parent, and next upon the Church. Let us suppose, however,

that on account of its importance parents are willing to take assistance from the state in this supreme matter of teaching religion, and no objection is raised to the use of the Scriptures and a catechism. It would be necessary to settle upon what portions of the Bible should be taught and what subjects should be embraced in a catechism.

Who would be found to do this most important work? Would the deputation be willing that the Government, or the Minister of Education, who is a good Presbyterian elder and an able man, should do it? Or if Mr. Ross and the Government both declined, would they take the next most natural course and appoint representatives of the different religious bodies to prescribe what should be taught from the Scriptures and in a catechism? Well, now, let us suppose, if we can, that Archbishop Walsh, the head of the Salvation Army in Canada (a woman, by the way, if we mistake not, just now), Rev. Dr. Langtry, who is not regarded by the Archbishop as a clergyman at all, and Rev. Dr. Caven and Dr. Potts only laymen in Dr. Langtry's eyes, also Baptist and Congregationalist representatives and others who regard the Bible as a good but antiquated book, and of no divine authority, and who abhor the very name of a catechism and dogma, have assembled, and these gentlemen, or lady and gentlemen, sit down to this most important work of drawing up a catechism for the religious instruction of the young, and each with his Bible before him, can anyone imagine that they could ever agree upon just what should be taught in our Public Schools under the name of religious instruction? We are really quite in earnest in this proposal, for certainly all of these at least would have a right to be heard.

But let this be supposed settled. The next thing would be the qualifications necessary on the part of teachers for imparting religious instruction. Dr. Langtry wishes the Government "to provide for the giving of religious instruction so that the Church might co-operate cordially with the Public School system in the future." Will the reverend Doctor explain what he means by "the Church?" According to him, the reason why religious instruction is not now given, is because "of the unfortunate divisions of the Christian Church and the jealousies arising out of them." Will the good Doctor explain how, when people have not been able to agree on the teaching of the Scriptures alone, all these divisions and jealousies are to be removed by the addition of a catechism to the Scriptures? And if non-episcopally ordained men who take to themselves without warrant the name of clergymen, are not, in the Doctor's opinion, duly qualified teachers, how in the name of reason are Public School teachers with no special instruction, or with only very little, to impart religious instruction aright? Are Public School teachers to be required to take a theological curriculum, and when they have done so who is to be the judge as to the correctness of their religious views, and will they require to be ordained by a bishop? If so, by what bishop? For according to Archbishop Walsh, there are no Anglican bishops, any more than the ministers of the Presbyterian and other sects are bishops.

We fear it won't work; that, practically, we can as yet, in a country like our own especially, where there are not only all forms of belief, but where happily all are equal in the eye of the law, come to much greater unanimity, or have better teaching of religion in our Public Schools than we now have. We yield to none in our sense of its importance, we do believe it to be most important; but how the State is more effectively to do this work than it is now doing it, we do not as yet see. What we would desiderate, and so far as we can see it is about all which in our divided state, religiously, we can attain to, is to raise higher the character of our Public School teachers, already in a vast number of instances very high. This can only be done by the steady raising, religiously, of the character of the whole body of the people. When we have done this, and have as we shall then, in all our schools the reverent reading daily of the Scriptures, the reverent offering up of prayer either voluntary or in printed form, and the daily life of the teacher is a daily lesson in the spirit and practice of religion, our Public Schools will be a most imparting means of imparting to the young instruction both in the spirit and practice of true religion. We meet this first practical difficulty at the very outset in taking any step in this important matter and until it is got over there is no necessity to discuss any other.

## Books and Magazines.

Perhaps the strongest story written by Willis Boyd Allen is that entitled "A Son of Liberty." It is a tale of the days preceding the American Revolution. Will Froisher, the hero, was a country lad from what is now Maine, living in Boston with his uncle while he attended school. His uncle and boy cousin were staunch Tories, but Will was a Son of Liberty, his father being a leader among those who were preparing for rebellion. The exciting adventures through which Will passed, and the picture of the stirring times in which he lived, are extremely well shown. [Congregational Sunday School Publishing Society, Boston and Chicago. Price \$1.25.]

It is almost a generation ago that J. T. Trowbridge first came into popularity with his famous war-stories, "Cudjo's Cave" and "Neighbor Jackwood." These books still find ardent readers and head the long list of Mr. Trowbridge's works that have been received with wide favor. The secret of this writer's success is that he knows boys and depicts them; not impossible and priggish heroes, but just boys. His latest story, "The Prize Cup," is marked by the qualities that have appeared in his other books. The title is obtained from a silver trophy won in an athletic contest, and it is about this cup, and its mysterious disappearance, that the plot develops. There are a full-half dozen of boys in the book—manly fellows, most of them. [The Century Company, New York. Price \$1.50.]

"The Swordmaker's Son," by that ever popular writer of juvenile fiction, W. O. Stoddard (he is pleasantly associated with our earliest recollections of such works), is a story of boy life in the Holy Land at the beginning of the Christian era. The hero is the son of a Jewish swordmaker, who rebels against the Roman domination of Judea and is driven into hiding. The plot brings the young hero into active participation with the very founding of Christianity, and the events of sacred history are treated in the most reverent spirit. There is also a picture of life in imperial Rome in the days of Tiberius, with an account of a foot-race and the preliminary training of the athletes. Mr. Stoddard visited Palestine for the sake of getting the local color for his story. The pictures which admirably illustrate the text have been drawn with careful attention to accuracy of detail, and the preservation of the spirit of the time and place. [The Century Company, New York. Price \$1.50.]

"The Reader's Shakespeare," which will appear complete in three volumes, and the second volume of which is before us, embodies an idea whose practical presentation has long been needed, even though no very crying demand may have made itself felt. In this work the plays of our great dramatist have been condensed by the omission of all unnecessary or objectionable scenes and words, the former being connected by short explanatory remarks, so that, as offered to the reader, the whole affords an admirable version of the different plays, anyone being readable in an hour or an hour and a half. The first volume contained the Histories; the second includes the Tragedies, with one romantic play, "The Tempest," while the third will be devoted to the Comedies. No better or more adequate form of Shakespeare's works could be placed in the hands of the young, while for general reading in the family circle, to say nothing of their adaptability to platform work, these volumes should obtain a very wide and deserved circulation. The editor, D. C. Bell, the eminent authority upon elocution, has performed his task remarkably well. [Funk & Wagnalls, 11 Richmond St., Toronto.]

Albert Stearns gave us last season "Chris and the Wonderful Lamp"—very happily described as the "Arabian Nights up to date"—which met with deserved popularity. Again this author has gone to the same source for inspiration for "Sindbad, Smith & Co.," the volume now before us. With a quaint conceit he introduces into nineteenth-century surroundings the most famous of Ancient Mariners. Sindbad's presence at this day and date is very easily explained. In one of his many voyages subsequent to the seven recorded by the Arabian scribe he succeeds in reaching the Fountain of Youth, and of course he quaffs of its waters. Travelling in the United States under the name of George W. Sindbad, of Bagdad, he falls in with a bright and lively American lad, Tom Smith. The two of them form a partnership to conduct a general exploration business. Sindbad's usual luck attends the enterprising firm, and they have the most surprising adventures by land and sea. Old-time enchantments fall somewhat of their impressiveness in this age, but they gain in humor. Mr. Stearns's account of the mishaps of poor old Sindbad will appeal to the sense of fun of boy and girl readers. [The Century Company, New York. Price \$1.50.]

The first of a series of articles in *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* (November), descriptive of the great educational centres in the United States, deals with Yale University, and, with its numerous illustrations, will be found of marked value by every one whose interest in things collegiate has not been obliterated. The tenth in the list of biographical sketches relating to the greatest military strategist America has produced, General Robert E. Lee, reveals the character and demeanour of Mrs. Lee during the war. "The Stage Debutante" gives an idea of some of the more recent acquisitions to the dramatic realm, accompanied by ten portraits. Perhaps the most attractive of these is that of Miss Eleanor Browning, a beautiful woman, who is appearing this season in one of the most powerful of recent-year dramas, "Sowing the Wind"—a play which Prof. Blaikie declared to be the strongest sermon he had ever heard from the words, "For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." [Frank Leslie's Publishing House, 42-44 Bond St., New York.]