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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.

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WOMAN'S FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY.

EVERY year the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society of the Western Section of the Presbyterian Church in Canada grows in numbers, interest and influence. Its fifth yearly meeting, which was held last week in this city was, all things considered, the most interesting and successful of the series. All who were present at its various sessions felt that it was indeed good to be there, and went away, we are sure, resolved to take in the future a far heartier and more active hand in the work of the Society than ever they had done previously.

There is nothing more natural or more becoming than that woman should take a specially active part in everything that is calculated to advance the cause of Christ whether at home or abroad; for His Gospel has come with a specially full cup of blessing to her in all her interests both for the life that now is and for that which is to come. Only under its benignant sway does she come, even approximately, to occupy her rightful position as neither the toy nor the drudge of the sterner sex, but his help meet, his friend, his companion, and co-heir with him of the grace of life. As Christianity has lost its spiritual power, both men and women have suffered grievously, but women most. What more natural then than that she who has been so specially benefited and blessed—who stood nearest the cross and was first at the sepulchre, should be specially zealous for the triumph of that which has made the Christian home and all which that implies?

PROVINCIAL SYNODS.

IT has been the fear of many that our district Synods would, after the fairest and fullest trial, be found to be practically of little use, or at least in any case by no means worth the trouble and expense incurred by their being held. The business brought before them, it has been argued, has been comparatively small, and the cases finally disposed of at any of their meetings neither numerous nor important. While there has been some ground for these objections and this anxiety, it is very evident that every year there is less and less reason for urging the one or for yielding to the other. The Synods are gradually finding their proper place and work, and are more and more efficiently occupying the one and discharging the other. No one, for instance, could have attended the late meeting of the Synod of Hamilton and London without being struck with this. The attendance was large, the interest displayed in the different matters which came before the court general and sustained, and the decisions such as almost entirely to Jude appeals to the Assembly, while the reports and discussions on such subjects as Sabbath Schools, State of Religion, Sabbath Observance, Education, etc., were on all hands acknowledged to be at once vigorous and timely.

We have no doubt that the same thing will have to be said of the coming meetings of all the other Synods, and that every year these meetings will be looked forward to with ever-growing interest, and will exercise an ever-widening influence for good at once upon the members of the Presbyterian Church and upon the community at large.

There is, in short, work, and of a very important kind, for these Synods to discharge—work which neither Presbyteries nor Assembly can so appropriately take in hand or so efficiently manage; nay, it might even be a very natural subject for discussion whether the range of that work might not be considerably extended to the advantage and advancement of the best interests of the Presbyterian Church and of our common Christianity as well.

THE REVISED VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

EVERYONE is aware that in a very short time the revised English version of the New Testament will be issued simultaneously in all parts of the British empire, and in the United States of America, so that any conjecture as to the extent and character of the changes and emendations made in it would be as useless as it is unnecessary. All are agreed that such a revision was desirable, and it is equally a matter on which there is a general consensus that with a few well-known exceptions, the changes to be made will be chiefly verbal, and will not affect in the slightest one single doctrine most surely believed among us. Whether these changes will be uniformly improvements, remains to be determined by actual examination, and whether or not the new version will supplant the one which has been so long in use is a point on which it is also scarcely worth while to dogmatize. In the mean time it is very evident that this new issue will draw a more than usually large amount of attention to the grand old book, and will lead many to talk about it, and, it is to be hoped to read it, who have hitherto troubled themselves very little about either the original text or the accuracy of the various translations. In the most unlikely quarters such discussions are already going on. Interviewers are very busy, and very positive opinions on moot points of Biblical criticism are being freely given by not a few who have never hitherto been suspected of troubling themselves much, if at all, with such matters. There is, in fact, every prospect of the "new version" being the book of the season, and as such of its being hawked through our railway cars, discussed by all sorts of persons, and read with all the freshness of novelty by multitudes, who could not bear to be behind the times, or to be even suspected of ignorance in reference to the correct translation of the sixth petition of our Lord's prayer, or to the weight of evidence against the retention of the "Three Witnesses," or "The woman taken in adultery." All this cannot but issue in great good, for in spite of all that is said both for and against the Bible, we are gravely of opinion that it is not nearly so much read, not to say studied, as it is thought to be, either by those who profess to be guided by its teachings or by such as affect to regard it as merely an antiquated and over-rated tradition. David Hume in his day confessed that he had never read the New Testament through even once, and many of the most noisy and most pretentious among the modern assailants of that by no means formidably large volume would, if they were equally honest, be forced to make a not greatly different acknowledgment. That many professed Christians are in a not very dissimilar condition may be safely affirmed without violating the requirements either of charity or truth. If then the issue of this new version so far change all this as to lead multitudes to come to the perusal of these Scriptures with all the freshness of novelty and with all the personal interest awakened in the first place by merely following the fashion, it will be something for which to be devoutly thankful, because such reading and such interest cannot in innumerable cases but result in permanent good. Of course there will be a great parade of very superficial Biblical learning and the "original" will often be referred to at times and in ways that may be positively whimsical. Still even all that, it may be hoped, will under the blessing of God, help forward the wide-spread, earnest and devout study of God's Word, so that multitudes who began the perusal merely from curiosity or because it was "the thing," may have in coming years to think of the issue of the revised English version of the New Testament as the most important epoch in their life's history, always to be thought of with the deepest interest and the devoutest praise.

One of the New York papers whose every-day discussions and teachings are as far away as can well be imagined from either the letter or the spirit of the Word of God thus indicates what may be expected, and like a straw shews how its conductors think the current sets among our neighbours:

"Now, however, we are to have the New Testament in great supply, to meet an enormous actual demand. People will buy it as they would any other book they were anxious to read. They will not need to be importuned to take a copy as a gift. When the revised New Testament is exposed for sale, therefore, we shall see a different sort of Bible reading from any to which we have been accustomed. It will come as

an entirely fresh book to a large share of those who buy it, and very many of them will read it for information and instruction, without any prejudice of education, either in its favour or against it. Hence, we say that the Bible is now about to receive a new kind of attention, and to be brought before an entirely new audience.

"What effect this novel treatment of the Scriptures will have, we must wait to see. It is manifest, however, that we are on the eve of a period of Biblical criticism and interpretation, to which there is no parallel in the past."

As our readers are aware the copyright is held in England, and the plan is to issue editions at such low rates, that even in the States it is thought that it will not pay to put out any others. In this expectation we are convinced the managers will find themselves mistaken, so that it would have been better to have supplied plates from which any number of accurate and authorized copies could have been thrown off on this side of the Atlantic, the more especially as very liberal pecuniary offers were made in order to secure this privilege.

In view of all this coming ferment and discussion it may surely be very reasonably expected that God's people the world over will be specially earnest in prayer that it may be the beginning of a great and wide-spread spiritual awakening, and may issue in life, refreshment, and strengthening to many weary, thirsty and perishing souls.

THE SCOTT ACT IN HAMILTON.

NOTHING could surely be more absurd and beyond the mark than to say that the defeat of the Scott Act in Hamilton has rung the death knell of total abstinence and prohibition all over Ontario. The fact is, it is far better for the advancement of both the one and the other that things should be as they are, than that the vote should have been the other way, but by a comparatively insignificant majority. That triumph of the anti-Scott party, and the manner in which it was celebrated, will not fill any of the more respectable of its supporters with feelings either of satisfaction or security. The drunken rowdy element was, in the celebration at least, too transparently in the ascendant, and the manner in which the gaudeamus was wound up was enough to fill every decent man who voted on that side at once with indignation and shame. Instead of the agitation over the whole subject being ended, it is simply beginning, and such exhibitions as Hamilton witnessed at the close of the "glorious celebration," will make many a thoughtful Christian man (and there have been, and are many such) who has not as yet seen his way to anything but opposition to the Scott Act, pause in his course, and revise and reverse at once his theoretic conclusions and his practical action.

THE eleventh annual report of the Ontario Mutual Insurance Company of Waterloo, published in other columns, reveals a healthy and ever-increasing business. Mr. Wm. Hendry, the energetic manager, has good reason to be proud of the very satisfactory position of his Company; and we have no doubt but that the prudent management which has characterized the Board of Directors in the past will be continued in the future; and that subsequent reports will prove quite as cheering as the one now placed before the readers of THE PRESBYTERIAN.

WE call special attention to the advertisement in reference to prizes offered for the best essays on certain specified subjects. We have no doubt that very many will cordially enter upon this competition, and that as the result, there will in due time be essays in the hands of the adjudicators, not only fairly entitled to the prizes offered, but worthy of being given to the public through the press. This ought especially to be the case with the competition which is open to the students of all the Presbyterian colleges of the Dominion. If a fresh, vigorous and comprehensive essay on Presbyterianism, such as may be circulated largely in our churches, and read with interest and avidity by the general community, shall be the result of this offer, a prize was never more fitly bestowed—money has not been invested with greater wisdom, or in a manner fitted to produce better results.

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