

must have been caused to many a minister in the midst of his self denying labours, at the prospect or the possibility that he might be taken away, and his wife written a widow and his children fatherless. It requires all economy and all a wife's good management, to enable him to live upon his salary, and perhaps he has been obliged to go in debt for house and land, but his salary is dependant upon his life, and his life is as uncertain as that of others. And but for his faith in the promises of that God, whose he is and whom he serves, how sad to think of the portion of those whom he may have to leave behind him. A woman it may be still young, gentle, and tenderly brought up, accustomed to the companionship of an educated christian minister, and moving in the refined society of the sphere to which her husband belonged, suddenly left with a number of small fatherless children, and entirely without the means of support. Such cases have occurred in the past in both branches of the church now united, and God has shown his faithfulness to his promises to the widow and fatherless, and brought them through all their trials, yet it has been only after their passing through scenes of privation, which it will be a sin in the church with her present means, and as stewards of God, to allow to be repeated. Since the Union the lives of our ministers have been mercifully preserved. Since that time with the exception of our missionaries, there has not been a single death among our ministers engaged in active service. Only one death has occurred in the Home field, and that was of an aged labourer, who had been in a great measure laid aside from public work. It cannot long be thus, and those removed may be in the prime of life. It would be no difficult matter for any member of our church by looking around him to find instances, in which, were the minister to be taken away, a widow would be left with five, six, seven, or it may be eight children, under sixteen years of age, entirely without the means of support.

The urgent necessity then, for a Ministers' Widows' Fund, will be universally acknowledged, and we would not have said so much on the point, but that we believe many of our

readers have not thought on the subject, and are not fully aware of the urgency of the matter. The only question remaining for consideration is the best mode of carrying out the object. It will at first sight occur to some that it might be sufficient, to collect a fund to be doled out in charity to the most needy widows, as they come upon the church. We do not disparage what has been done in this way formerly. The collections made at different times in both branches of the Church, both publicly and privately, have in various instances afforded most seasonable relief to pinching poverty. But a little consideration will show how unsuitable this plan is. How humiliating to the poor widows to be placed in such a position of dependence as to be in fact a church pauper and receiving charitable aid! Nothing but dire necessity would induce any woman of proper feelings to seek such aid, and how unworthy of the church to leave the widows of faithful ministers in such a position.—Then, too, how inadequate and precarious the amounts that would be received in this manner; and how painful to every man of right feeling the prospect of leaving his family in such a situation. In fact every minister of ordinary prudence or proper spirit, would in this case feel it his duty to seek some other means of providing for those whom he might leave behind him.

The Synod therefore had no hesitation in adopting as the basis of their measure, the plan which has been adopted in Scotland and which has been so successful there. That is for each minister to pay in a certain amount annually and his widow to be entitled to a certain specified annual sum, according to this rate of annual payment, to be paid to her from the time of her husband's death, so long as she lives or till she marries again, and a certain sum additional to be paid annually for the benefit of each orphan, while under fifteen or sixteen years of age. On this basis a scheme has long been in operation both among the ministers of the Established Church of Scotland and among the Dissenters, and a similar scheme has more recently been adopted by the Free Church. Those schemes have all been greatly blessed, and none can tell the amount