

Our Contributors.

THE MONEY WAS FOUND.

BY KNONONIAN.

Found for what? Not for the schemes of the Church. That has to be found yet, and we are all hopeful that it will be forthcoming before Dr. Reid closes his books on the 30th day of April. The money found was for Christmas presents, and if the reports about the Christmas trade are correct, the holiday trade was as good in many places as it has been for years.

The *Globe* of the 29th December has reports from all the centres of trade in the Dominion. With two or three exceptions the reports are quite favourable. Many merchants say the people bought freely and paid cash. The crowds on Saturday in Brantford, St. Thomas, London and other places were "record breakers." There has been much complaining about hard times, but competent authorities say that when the Christmas season came around there was nothing to show that the purchasing power of the people had diminished.

Two or three points stand out prominently in the *Globe* reports. One is that the number of the purchasers was larger than during any previous holiday season. Some dealers say that high priced articles did not go off so readily, but the volume of trade was larger because the number of purchasers was larger. This is a most gratifying fact, for it shows that the ability to purchase Christmas gifts was not confined to a few rich people. The average man had some money to spend and he spent it.

Another fact made plain by prominent dealers in Toronto, is that an unusually large trade was done in jewelry, pianos, organs and furs. These are not things that sensible people buy when they are hard up. The well known piano and organ firm, Gourlay, Winter & Leeming, told the *Globe* that they are sending their instruments through "extended territory," and "steadily reaching new fields." Some of the people in these new fields are happily able to buy good musical instruments.

It is easy to say that the *Globe* reports are too favourable. They are more likely to be the other way. Were the *Globe* merely a party organ it would never have published these favourable reports at all—much less would it have published them under headlines sensational enough to do for the report of a boodle investigation. Considering the proximity of the Dominion elections, it required rare courage to lay such reports before electors. As regards the merchants, it is quite safe to assume that a large majority of them would not say trade was good unless it was good. Mercantile, like every other kind of human nature, is quite ready enough to look on the dark side of things.

Must we assume that though depression has existed and still exists in some places, that the state of trade is better than the state of religion. Everybody is familiar with the extracts usually made from Presbyterian or Synodical reports, and published in the Assembly's report on the state of religion in the Presbyterian Church. Keep these in mind and compare them with the following report on the state of trade. One dry-goods house says, "They never before had so many people in the house, and never did so large a trade as this year's proved to be." Another says, "We had a good rush through the holiday season, and served many more customers than usual." A third party said they had been "fairly successful; were satisfied and had a better trade than last year." A fourth said his city trade was three times as large as last year, and his orders by mail five times as large. A fifth said his business was "highly satisfactory"; and a sixth that his holiday trade was a "record breaker." A jewelry firm in the same city say they were several thousand dollars ahead of last year, and were, of course, very well pleased." A second had all the busi-

ness they could desire for two weeks, and had a most "satisfactory excess" over last year. And so on to the end of the Toronto chapter.

Now look at the Hamilton chapter. One firm reports "trade better than that of last year." A second says "very much ahead of last year; trade most satisfactory." A third, "very satisfactory, though not better than last year." A fourth, "better than last year; receipts larger." A fifth, "better than last year; cash trade considerably better." A sixth, "business exceedingly good; away ahead of last year; an increase in every line." Several other firms give equally good reports. Well done Hamilton. There is a lot of people up there who know their shorter catechism.

BRANTFORD

had the largest influx of country visitors on the Saturday before Christmas ever known in the history of that home of oratory. The farmers bought well and put down the money. Good for Brantford.

LONDON

had a Saturday crowd that broke the record and brought "smiles to the countenance and shekels to the counter of many a merchant." Nine or ten firms report that they had a good time.

From other places the reports are equally favourable. Now, seriously, do the threatened deficits in our Church funds, come mainly from the state of religion, or from the state of trade? Let every loyal Presbyterian wrestle with that question. And be it remembered that in scores of smaller places business was, relatively, just as good as in the centres mentioned.

AUGMENTATION.

BY REV. J. ROBERTSON, D.D.

The Augmentation Fund seems to be on its trial this year, and you will allow me to say a few things in its behalf. This is not a fund to give ministers larger salaries, as some suppose, but a fund to assist weak congregations to secure and support pastors. With us, in the West, last year augmented congregations gave \$10.50 per member for salaries alone; and the average, for salary, for all congregations in the Church was only \$4.64. The whole of the augmented congregations (W. D.) gave for salary \$6.75 per communicant, and 20 of them gave \$2,800 for schemes, one \$300. But notwithstanding the liberality shown by themselves, they cannot, without assistance, support a pastor. This fund helps them. It is Presbyterian to do so, for the Church is a unit—a body—not a sand heap. It is scriptural, for the strong are enjoined to help to bear the burdens of the weak. Were the Augmentation Fund abolished these congregations must close their doors or be put on the Home Mission list. To close their doors would be a distinct loss to the Church, to the cause of true religion and even to morals. It is well known that the drift of our rural population is city-wards. Close our weak country churches and our people will join other communions. When the children of such people come to our cities they will go to swell the membership of the churches that cared for them in the country, and our Church, lacking such accessions, must decline relatively. The battle for the cities must be fought out in the country. And if Presbyterian services are not within reach some people will attend no other, and such are apt to lapse. Such things have happened and will happen again. Are Presbyterian people with their general good sense to risk this for the sake of a few cents each a year?

But why not put these augmented congregations on the Home Mission list? Because the additional burden would swamp that fund. The Home Mission Committee is asking \$79,000 to carry on its work this year. Could it get \$31,000 additional to support the augmented congregations if on the list? We shall never get for one fund what we are getting for the two. Last year 14

city congregations gave \$7,762 or $\frac{1}{3}$ of all given for augmentation; and 7 congregations gave \$5,600 or an average of \$800 each. Would they give these large sums to Home Missions in addition to present contributions? I throw not. And would the congregations that now refuse to contribute to augmentation make up this loss? I doubt it.

At large expense the church is carrying on a work to evangelize the French in Quebec. The Augmentation Fund is helping a number of struggling Protestant settlements in Quebec to maintain ordinances, and prevent the people being absorbed by the Church of Rome. Withdraw this help and those people must move out or be left for the Romish Church to operate on. Is there any sense in allowing our own people and their children to turn Roman Catholics, while we are trying to convert the French to Protestantism? And if our people leave Quebec the Romish Church is strengthened for aggressive work, and an important bulwark against her advance into Ontario removed. How can sound Protestant congregations refuse to support augmentation and yet give liberal help to French Evangelization?

Others have shown that this Fund has helped, since its inception, 225 congregations to become self-supporting, and some of these are giving valuable help to the schemes of the Church. Ten such congregations, West of Lake Superior, gave last year to the schemes \$10,742, or \$1,074 each on an average. Let us rear more of these if we wish a strong Church.

In Western Canada augmentation is simply Home Missions in its more advanced stages. A group of stations has reached the point when they can promise a pastor \$600, and they ask the Augmentation Committee to give them a small grant for a few years, till they can support him themselves. These people want a man of their own choice; they will do more to support him than if appointed by the Home Mission Committee; he feels more confident where called; can summon his people better to his help; can lay out his work to better advantage and do more and better service. Why not grant these people's request?

Moreover, many of our frontier districts are supplied by men supported by the Augmentation Fund. Comox, the most remote of our missions in British Columbia, called a pastor and is on the augmentation list. For years Edmonton, the most Northern district in the Territories occupied by our Church, and Prince Albert, also, on the North Saskatchewan, have been aided by this fund, and both nearly to the point of half support. And places that are now central and strong were not long ago remote and weak, and the Augmentation Fund helped to put them on their feet. Portage la Prairie, Gladstone, Neepawa, Brandon, Port Arthur, Fort William, Regina, Morden, Pilot Mound, Calgary and the rest have graduated from the Augmentation Fund. To-day twenty-eight are on the list and thirty-five have become self-sustaining in Western Canada.

It is difficult to get suitable men to occupy our missions; not quite so difficult to get men to accept calls to augmented congregations. Encourage a scheme that helps to get the best men.

Going through the Church one bears objections to the fund which there is no space here to consider. Suffice it to say that they are not to be mentioned in comparison with the arguments in favor of the fund. This is the deliberate judgment of the General Assembly. The Western Section last year gave about an average of 16 cents per communicant for this fund. Grant that one fifth of this money was not judiciously expended—which is not the case—and that four-fifths was properly placed, surely no Presbyterian conscience is so constituted that it can wreck the fund for three cents a year! Let an average of one cent a fortnight be given to the fund and it can be well sustained and continue to be a blessing to the Church.

Winnipeg, Man., Dec. 26th, 1894.

THE LATE REV. DAVID WILSON,
D.D., LIMERICK, IRELAND.

BY K.

By the decease of the above named divine, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has lost one of her most popular and successful ministers. David Wilson was born in Ballymena, County Antrim, a town of considerable importance, and the seat of the linen trade, at that time. His grandfather was a leading physician in the neighborhood. It is said that during the Rebellion of 1798, he influenced a number of the rebels to lay down their arms on the public streets, and go home peaceably, when they quaintly asked him: "Who is to pay us for the trouble we have had." David Wilson was educated in Ballymena, and at the Royal Academical Institution, Belfast, and Presbyterian College, there; but, like a great many of the Irish students, took a session under Dr. Chalmers. Having been licensed to preach, he was called to Camanacy, a good charge near Belfast, in 1844, but he only remained here for a few months. He was called to the city of Limerick, in which congregation he remained ever since, having passed his jubilee about two years ago.

When he went to Limerick there were only about nineteen families in the congregation, and at present there are over eighty.

Dr. Wilson held a high position in the church, having been twice called to the Moderator's chair, and guided the deliberations of the Assembly successfully, through many stormy debates.

For many years he was Convener of the Colonial Mission, in which he took a lively interest; and in company with the late Rev. Drs. Edgar and Dill, crossed the Atlantic. As a fruit of their labours, they took back £10,000 stg. While in Limerick he built a new church; and his congregation is the second largest in the south. His parish was a very large one, estimated at about eighty miles in length, and about forty miles in breadth. He was not only the most prominent minister in the Presbytery of Munster, but one of the most prominent in the General Assembly. He was located in a Roman Catholic neighborhood, and although manfully holding and teaching the great doctrines of the Presbyterian Church, he did so in a way that kept unbroken the peace of the city; and was on most intimate terms with bishops of the English and Roman Catholic Churches.

Dr. Wilson may be said to have died in harness. He preached in his own pulpit ten days before his death; and conducted his own prayer-meeting two days before his death. I am not aware that Dr. Wilson has left any published books behind him. He was more a man of action, and a speaker. His discourses were eloquent, convincing and thoroughly evangelical. His funeral, which was large, was attended by all classes and creeds; and his death has left a breach in the ranks of the ministry, which will not be easily filled.

The Rev. Dr. Todd Martin, of Belfast, the Moderator of the General Assembly, attended the funeral, and in the course of a powerful address, among other things said: "Our friend had reached the measure of man's days. His years were filled with the active, diligent performance of duties of the highest kind. They were spent in preaching Christ, in pastoral oversight, in discharging the office of a bishop of the church, in promoting missions, in endeavoring to direct, on right lines, the education of the people, in the administration of charities, and in the many forms of aid which a wise, kind-hearted man is so often called on to render to persons in perplexity or difficulty. . . . His work is work that abides. The fruits of it will be reaped in this and other lands."

Toronto, Dec. 28, 1894.

There is as much difference between reading the Bible and reading about it as there is between eating dinner and reading the bill of fare.