

"I had my Mary with me when I was there last, and I dread the thought of the long days with no kenneled face near me. Milne is growing old and frail like myself, and I will need to spare her all I can. And now will you let me have your Allison Bain for a while?"

"We can tell you nothing about her except what we have seen since she came into our house," said Mrs. Hume gravely. "It was a risk our taking her as we did, but we were sorely in need of some one."

"But you are not sorry that you took her into your house?"

"Far from that! She has been a blessing in our house, as doubtless she would be in yours should she go with you."

"There is no doubt but it would be to her advantage to go with you. And we could not prevent her if she wished to go when her year with us is at an end," said Mr. Hume.

"Yes, it would be better for her to go. We ought not to hinder her," said his wife; but they looked at one another, thinking of Marjorie.

"I thank you both gratefully for your kindness in being willing to spare her to me," said Mrs. Esselmont. "But that is only the beginning of my petition. The child Marjorie! Would it break your heart to part with her for a while? Wait, let me say a word before you refuse to hear me. The child is evidently growing stronger as she grows older. Allison has helped her, but there is more in the change than that. I am certain—at least I have hope—that she might be helped by one who has been proved to have skill in dealing with such cases. Let me take Marjorie to Dr. Thorne, in London. He is a great physician and a good man. He is my friend, and I know that whatever can be done for the child he can do, and will be happy in doing it. Think of your gentle, little darling grown strong and well, with a useful and happy life before her!"

A rush of tears came to the eyes of Mrs. Hume. The minister went to the window and looked long on the swaying branches of the firs, which were only just visible through the mist and the rain. Mrs. Esselmont laid herself back on her pillow and waited.

"Well?" said she after a little.

"Well, mother?" said the minister, sitting down again.

"Speak for us both," said his wife.

(To be continued.)

POSSESSION.

I've a river that comes from the mountains,
A river I never have seen;
It rushes in torrents and cascades,
Or slips soft meadows between;
I have islands enchanted in sunset,
And hill-tops that smile to God,
And many a wild, sweet pathway,
Where never my feet have trod.

I have moors where the heather is springing,
And copses of furze and brown;
And fair green lanes with their hedges,
And the primroses all in bloom.
My lakes in the moonlight lie gleaming,
While the slow years come and go;
And the peaks of the grand old mountains,
Are waiting for me, I know.

I have friends that are leal and tender,
Uplifting and glad and strong;
Though I know not to-day their faces,
As they pass with the busy throng.
Life may be too short to find them,
Too fettered with pain and care,
But sure as I love them truly
They still shall be mine somewhere.

And you who e'en now are holding
These treasures I may not see,
If with eyes and with heart unmindful,
Lo! they are not to you, but me!
For the things that we seem possessed of
May be as the short-lived flowers;
But those that we love and long for,
Are ever and only ours.

Cara W. Bronson.

THE LITERARY INFLUENCE OF THE BIBLE.

We are very far from claiming the Bible as the only agency in creating the beauty and strength of English and German literature, but it is simply a matter of fact that no other causes have been so powerful or so far-reaching. Without it there could have been no Milton, no Carlyle, Emerson or Ruskin, and probably, if the secret influence could be discovered which created ancestral habits of thoughtfulness, no Shakespeare or Goethe or any of the great writers of peasant origin. We should have had others undoubtedly, but of far inferior quality of mind and heart. When we examine the Bible with the sternest critical eyes we are compelled to admit that it is great enough to be the cause of all which we have ascribed to its influence. Without speaking of its moral or religious qualities it is evident that its literary merits are supreme. Let any one go through it from Genesis to Revelation, and while he will find passages that are now unspeakably uninteresting, yet on every page will be found some pearl of great price, which, even if it were not regarded as a sacred word, the human race would never allow itself to forget. Whatever may be thought of the scientific accuracy of the first chapters of Genesis, few would be willing to have that graphic and poetic account of the creation fade out of the mind. The Bible contains every kind of literature and can furnish specimens of each which can hold their own with the best that the race has produced. Its historical portions, besides being the oldest attempts to trace the history of mankind, and describing the Divine

method of dealing with one of the most gifted races of the world, are related with a simplicity and directness which no later historian has surpassed. Its biographies, chapters of human life, when the race was young and men were vigorous in their virtues and great in their crimes, have a charm which can never lose its power. No novelist has ever written a sweeter story than the Book of Ruth. No dramatist has ever treated the universal problem of man's destiny and God's ways with him with such seeing eye and understanding heart, "all in such free, flowing outlines, grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity, in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation." It is not its devotional element alone which has given the Book of Psalms its unequalled place in the liturgies of Christendom, but this is partly due to the fact that it contains poetry of the noblest and most inspiring quality. Even in a prose translation—a test which no other great body of poems like Homer could survive—it appeals to the mind no less than to the emotions, and maintains its position, not wearying by repetition nor weakening through lapse of years. Probably no portion of the Bible has suffered so much in translation as the Book of Proverbs; but nevertheless St. James's version contains sentences of exquisite literary finish, while the wisdom of the generations which have followed has never crystallized itself in more concise or convincing form. Nor is it the spiritual utterances of the prophetic books which give them their only charm. Gems of poetry, having the Divine qualities which touch the imagination and render their places in the literature of the world permanent, are to be found in Isaiah and Jeremiah. The literary qualities of the Bible have been largely forgotten in the far greater grandeur of its religious and moral qualities, but the sacred Book could never have retained the respect of scholars or, indeed, wholly of the ignorant, if it had been a crude, incondite, and confused jumble, like the Koran. It is certainly a matter of the most profound congratulation that a book that was to be read daily in so many homes, and weekly in all the churches, and which was to be the first popular literature of so many nations, should be cast in such excellent literary form. What its influence has been in the quickening of imagination and thoughtfulness, and as an inspiration of literature, can of course never be measured, but it is only second to the moral and religious influence it has exerted. A large part of this result among English-speaking people is due to the translators of our popular and long-used version. Whatever this lacks in accuracy, it is certainly a "well of English undefiled," and its place can never be taken by anything which is not its equal.—*Providence Journal*.

THE CHINESE AND THE HUMAN BODY.

Born savage and semi-barbarous people have always exhibited a great repugnance to any surgical operation, however necessary, which involves amputation. The North China *Herald*, in commenting upon this circumstance, points out that the Chinese have always shown this repugnance, not on account of fear of pain, for they are patient under all kinds of physical suffering, but because they look upon it as a duty to keep the body intact. If they submit to the amputation of a limb, they invariably ask for the severed member, and keep it in a box, to be buried in due time with the owner. Sometimes they will actually eat it, thinking it only right that that which has been taken from the body should be returned to it. On the same principle an extracted tooth will be carefully preserved or ground to powder and swallowed in water. Another curious phase of the same idea is seen in the belief that a sick parent can be cured by broth made from flesh cut from a living child, and it is looked upon as a sign of filial piety for the child to submit himself to an operation for that purpose. The child is supposed to be of the vital essence of the parent, and if a portion of this essence is returned to the fountain-head the parent will be greatly strengthened. The peace-loving nature of the Chinese is said to be largely due to this respect for the human body.—*Chambers' Journal*.

The Canadian Mutual Aid Association is not yet a very old monetary institution, but judging from the report, appearing elsewhere in this issue, presented at the recent annual meeting, it has certainly made most satisfactory progress. The volume of business is steadily increasing and the affairs of the Association are conducted by men whose competence and integrity invite confidence.

At the thirty-eighth annual meeting, held last week of the Western Assurance Company the directors were able to present a most favourable report, to be found in another column, of the condition and transactions of this prosperous company. The business, so ably managed, and with which so many prominent and reliable men are associated, shows a most gratifying expansion. The Western has evidently a splendid future before it.

The British America Assurance Company has become an historic institution, having been in existence for over half a century. The fifty-sixth annual meeting has just been held, and the report, appearing in another column, presents a most satisfactory showing. The extensive business carried on by the British America rests on a solid foundation. It is ably, intelligently, and energetically conducted by men whose names stand high in the mercantile community.

British and Foreign.

THE Unitarian College is to be removed from London to Oxford.

ON one Chicago railroad, trains are heated by steam and lighted by electricity. Both improvements work well.

OF the six and a half million Jews constituting the Jewish Dispersion, about four millions are found in the East.

BISHOP RYLE will not now consecrate any building that has not secured an endowment and a permanent repair fund.

AT Chatham, the social evenings instituted by the Presbyterians, as a counter attraction to the public house, are most successful.

THEODORE PARKER, on reading "Judson's Life," declared that if missions had produced but one such hero, all costs were repaid.

IT is proposed to place a headstone over the grave in Killeveodan churchyard of Ewen MacLachlan, a noted Gaelic scholar who died sixty-six years ago.

A NEPHEW of the late King Cetewayo, after six years in Sweden, devoted to theological and other studies, has gone back to carry on mission work in his native land.

INROX congregation have resolved to apply to the Presbytery to moderate in a call to Rev. David W. Forrest, M.A., Moffat, as successor to the late lamented Dr. Leckie.

THE New Year's temperance tract, by Rev. Wm. Ross, sold to the extent of 50,000 within a fortnight, and of the "Queries," by Rev. G. Knight, 14,000 were sold in the same time.

THE executors of the late Mrs. Kay, of Broughton Street, Edinburgh, have paid to Archbishop Smith \$5,000, which she bequeathed to form the nucleus of a fund to build a Roman Catholic cathedral in Edinburgh.

AN aggregate meeting of all the U.P. elders in Ayr and Kilmarnock Presbyteries is to be held in the latter town, when an address will be given by Mr. Gray, B.D., Irvine, on the elder's oversight of the flock.

THE Rev. Thomas Hill, of Willison Church, Dundee, who was ordained in 1846, and is the oldest officiating clergyman in that city, is about to apply for a colleague and successor on the ground of his advanced years.

THE foundation stone of the pedestal for the statue of Dr. Lang at Sydney, was laid by the Governor of New South Wales, on 8th December. Among those present were the son and daughter, and other relations of Dr. Lang.

DR. JAMES MCCOSH, ex-president of Princeton College, has in the Scribner's press the crowning philosophical work of his long and fruitful life, the title of which is: "First and Fundamental Truths. A Treatise on Metaphysics."

MR. JAMES BRIDGES, a member of the church who edits the *Pertshire Advertiser*, is about to publish a work in two massive volumes dealing with the ecclesiastical history of Scotland during the early part of the seventeenth century.

THE Rev. James Patterson, of Ballater, having expressed his desire to accept the call to Belgrave church, London, the Presbytery of Kincardine O'Neil decided in accordance therewith; but the congregation have appealed to the Synod.

LENZIE Free churchmen who have been worshipping in the Union Church with the U.P.'s, are dissatisfied about the introduction of the organ, and are thinking of forming a separate congregation. The Union Church is in a flourishing state.

THE Duke of Athole has written to Dunkeld Presbytery thanking them for their address on the occasion of his silver wedding, and assuring them that the Duchess and he would always do what they could to further the interests of the Church.

MESSRS. DUFFY, of Dublin, Roman Catholic booksellers, have just published a new edition of the Douay Bible, with the usual notes and comments, at a moderate price. The edition has the sanction of the Romish archbishops and bishops of Ireland.

THE total population of India may be put at 200 millions; less than four millions are under instruction; and of this number, ninety-four per cent. are only learning to read and write in the vernacular, and to practise the simplest rules of arithmetic.

DR. JAMES MCCOSH, ex-president of Princeton, is expected to be present at next Free Church General Assembly. He and Mr. Laird, the Moderator-elect, are the only ministers now living who were members of the old Established Presbytery of Arbroath.

A CONVERT of the mission of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, of Ireland, at Antioch, where Rev. Dr. Martin is stationed, has been murdered on account of his religion in a riot by Greek churchmen. The Foreign Office is using its influence to have the murderers punished.

CARDINAL LEDOCHOWSKI, formerly Archbishop of Posen and Primate of Poland, is dead. He was imprisoned under the Falk Laws, but was released on condition that he go abroad. Thereafter he resided in Rome. Pope Leo showed him great kindness and consulted with him.

THE fire insurance trust is proving a great success, the business done during the first quarter amounting to £292,327, with proposals in hand to the amount of £200,150, which, if accepted, will bring the total to about half a million. There have been no losses on church or manse buildings.

COLEBROOKE ROW congregation is the nearest to the centre of London, and has to contend with continual migration to the suburbs; yet during the past year, under Dr. Thain Davidson, it has more than maintained its position. The Agricultural Hall services are as well attended as ever.

DR. WHITELAW, of Kilmarnock, the well-known Bible commentator, has completed the twenty-fifth year of his ministry; and on a recent Sunday semi-jubilee services were conducted in his church, when Principal Cairns preached twice, Dr. Whitelaw himself officiating in the afternoon; the attendance was very large.

THE Rev. John Smith, of Broughton Place, Edinburgh, in reply to a deputation from Carrubber's Close mission, asking him to decline the call to Claremont Church, Glasgow, said the interests of his present congregation had certainly a prior claim on him. At the same time he frankly stated that the claims of Glasgow and the Church as a whole must have his serious consideration. He has received a requisition from the elders, members and adherents of Broughton Place with over 1,500 signatures urging him to remain.