

OWEN SOUND.

To the Editor of the Record.

DEAR SIR,—

It may be interesting to some of your readers to know something of what we are doing, as a Church, in Owen Sound—congregated, as we are, from various parts of the province, where we have severally left our relatives and friends, who are interested in our welfare.

In the beginning of last summer, a female sewing association was formed, in connection with our congregation. The immediate object was to procure a pulpit Bible, and other needful things for the Church. Females in all parts of our scattered congregation took a lively interest in it; and ladies of other denominations kindly tendered their assistance, which was very gratifying.

On the 25th ultimo, they had a sale. A large number of people were in attendance, and most of the articles were disposed of.

In the evening, a soiree was held in the church, at which were present about two hundred persons. After tea, W. D. Taylor, Esq., in the name of the association, presented to me, as minister of the congregation, an excellent English pulpit Bible, and two Psalm Books, and also a Gaelic Bible and Psalm Books, for the pulpit, in an appropriate and impressive address; to which I replied. We were then favoured with suitable addresses from the Rev. Messrs. Hutchinson and Nelans of the Methodist Church, and also from Richard Carney, William Boyd, and John Frost, Esqrs. The Rev. Mr. Wadsworth, well known as a warm advocate of total abstinence principles, having unexpectedly arrived, kindly consented to address the audience.

The choir generously volunteered their services, and acquitted themselves much to the enjoyment and satisfaction of the company.

After singing the 133d Psalm, which seemed to me to be suited to the occasion, and pronouncing the benediction, we parted—cemented, I hope, more closely, both as a community and as a congregation, in the bonds of Christian union.

The sum realized was about £17, which, compared with the sums raised in some other congregations, appears insignificant, but, viewed in connection with the incipient state of this place, warrants us to thank God, and take courage.

On the afternoon of the following day, we had a meeting even more interesting. The children attending the Sabbath school, about sixty in number, met in the church and had tea, after which they received prizes. They were then addressed by the Rev. Mr. Nelans, Mr. Taylor, the superintendent, Mr. Boyd, and myself, successively. These addresses were listened to by the young congregation with marked attention and apparent interest. They then retired, evidently very well pleased, and I hope, encouraged to persevere in the discharge of their duties as Sabbath scholars.

I can say, for myself, that this was a deeply interesting meeting; feeling, as I did, how much, under God, the future moral and religious character of the place will depend upon the instructions which these little ones may receive. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

I have only to add our thanks to Christian friends at a distance, who kindly contributed to our stock.

DURHAM.

I beg also to set before your readers some particulars in reference to Durham and its vicinity as a missionary field.

Durham is a growing village on the Owen Sound Road, 43 miles north of Fergus, and 28

south of the Sound. It is situated on the northern bank of the Big Saugin, the principal river in this part of the country. The Owen Sound, or Garafaxa road is there intersected by the Durham road, which renders it a place of considerable importance. This road opens up a vast tract of land, as yet almost an unbroken forest east and west, a part of which is amongst the best in the Province. This is particularly true of the country between Durham and Lake Huron. In the townships of Bentinck and Brant, the land is very thickly settled on each side of the road, about 30 miles west from the Owen Sound road, and a large portion of the people are Presbyterians, adherents of our Church, who are in a very destitute state in regard to the means of grace, having never been visited by any Presbyterian Minister or Preacher of our Church except once by myself in January last, when I had the pleasure of preaching to about 70 people. I learned, while there, that there is a station of much greater importance in Brant, seven or eight miles further west.

East of Durham there is also a settlement of Presbyterians, which was occasionally supplied by Mr. Nicholson last summer.

At Durham the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed by Mr. Smellie, of Fergus, and we having formed a Kirk Session, by associating with us Mr. McDermid, an Elder from our congregation here, and other two Elders, Messrs. Ledingham and Brown, who reside at some distance from the place.

The services commenced on the preceding Thursday, as a day of humiliation. The state of the weather and the roads was very unfavourable, which probably prevented many from attending. On the Sabbath, however, we had about 300 hearers. The services were conducted in English and Gaelic, in separate places, which were crowded.

Sixty communicants were enrolled, and a number of children were baptized.

Thus a congregation was formed which, with the blessing of God, we hope will be the beginning of better days amongst the people of that vicinity.

Mr. Smellie and I regretted much that these people were to be left again as sheep without a shepherd. They have none to remind them of their solemn obligations as professing Christians. The natural consequence (we may expect) is that any good impressions that may have been made by the administration of word and ordinance, is long ago effaced by the cares of this world. We must not, however, limit the Holy One of Israel, if he please to make any seed that was sown fruitful, he is not confined to means.

The people appeared anxious for the preaching of the gospel among them, and there was a meeting of the congregation held after the services on Monday, and steps were taken to support the Home Mission Fund, and to obtain the services of one of the Students during the coming summer, in which we hope they may be successful. "The harvest in this quarter is truly 'plentiful, and the labourers are few.' Let us pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he may 'send forth more labourers.'"

I remain, Dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

JOHN McKINNON.

MISSIONARIES FROM IRELAND.

The Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland have appointed four Missionaries to the North American Colonies, viz.:

Rev. W. P. Grey, Minister of Lowtherstown, Rev. Wm. Hogg, formerly of Bandon, and recently of Belfast Town Mission, Mr. J. Mitchell, Licentiate of the Presbytery of Donegal, Mr. George Brown, Licentiate of the Presbytery of Ballibay.

SUSTENTATION OF THE MINISTRY.

To the Editor of the Record.

SIR,—

I share in the anxiety expressed by your correspondent Q., in regard to the important matter of the sustentation of our ministers;—persuaded, as I am, that, until it be placed on a sounder basis, the progress and efficiency of the Church will be grievously hindered.

The poorer and weaker congregations must be "saved from ruin;" and the position of the majority of the ministers must be so raised as that, freed from the heart-gnawing anxieties arising not merely from insufficient incomes, but from irregularity of payments, they may be enabled to give themselves wholly to their work, and take their proper place as the learned intelligent leaders of an intelligent and active laity.

A general sustentation fund, therefore, seems to me indispensable. In this way only can we save many congregations from ruin, and bearing one another's burdens fulfil the law of Christ; in this way only shall we feel ourselves to be indeed "one body," sharers alike of weal and woe, of prosperity and adversity; this is the only feasible way by which the incomes of the ministers of the weaker congregations can be increased, and, what is scarcely less important, regularity of payment insured;—everybody knows how sadly a small income is frittered away by the irregularity and uncertainty of the time of payment.

One or two other modes of bettering their condition may be suggested.

A fund for the widows and orphans, and, conjoined with this, a provision for the superannuated. This is happily begun, and I cannot bring myself to think so ill of the Church as to suppose for a moment the possibility of its failure.

Following the example of the Free Church of Scotland, let us endeavour to provide a manse and a small glebe for each congregation.

After the same noble example, let us take measures to raise the incomes to the minimum stipend of £125 cy.

I quite agree with you that the learning and endowments of our ministers ought to be raised to a high standard;—the times, the Church herself, the increased and increasing intelligence of the laity alike demand it; but with the present inadequate provision for the majority of them, I hold it to be little better than idle mockery to talk of it.

He that wishes to spare his purse will never want a plausible and satisfactory pretext—satisfactory, at least, to himself; but surely some better way of hindering unworthy ministers from entering the Church may be found, than the strange one of keeping worthy and faithful men at the starvation point; and surely a lay eldership and deaconship, composed of shrewd, intelligent, and calculating men, will be quite able to manage this business satisfactorily. Upon them the duty properly devolves.

I heartily re-echo the words of your correspondent. "It gladdens my heart to hear that a movement has been made towards this desirable object by influential parties in your city." I also agree with him, that it is mainly the business of us—the laity. Let the committee, then, go on, undiscouraged by the apathy of any party. Our own welfare, our children's, the welfare of the Church of the Living God—aye, and to no small extent, the welfare of our country, is linked with their object. I know that I give utterance to the sentiments of not a few when I say, that we will count it a privilege to be allowed to be fellow workers with them.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,

A LAYMAN.