

from the love of gain, but from a desire to diffuse the truths of salvation, conveyed Bibles and religious pamphlets to cities, towns, and hamlets, and disposed of them at the peril often of liberty and life. As a modern institution, however, it is American rather than European. Its introduction into this province and employment as a means of diffusing sound religious information among our people date back some 17 years, and are to be referred chiefly to the zeal and perseverance in the work of Rev. John I. Baxter of Onslow. By his representations chiefly the Presbyterian Synod of Nova Scotia were led to encourage the enterprise, and under direction of a Committee, of which Mr. Baxter was convener, the works of the Presbyterian Board of Publication began to flow freely into our congregations more especially in the central and eastern sections of our province. In 1858, Mr. Baxter reported that during the year past 5136 volumes had been put into circulation, and that the whole number circulated during the previous six years, amounted to 50,000, the receipts and disbursements of the Committee amounting during that time to Four thousand pounds N. S. currency.

Shortly after this time, the tide of prosperity was sensibly checked by causes beyond the control of the Committee, and the circulation under direction of Synod diminished. Subsequently new and energetic agents appeared upon the field, and a good work, and upon an extensive scale, was carried on by the American Book and Tract Society, large pecuniary aid being furnished by the city of Halifax, two of our own congregations contributing one year two hundred dollars. The work which that American Society conducted with so much vigour has now been undertaken by Christian men in our own land and is conducted by a Union Committee representing all the evangelical Churches in the Lower Provinces. We will in a few brief statements show what is now being accomplished by these two agencies, the one Synodical, the other general.

Colportage in connection with the Synod has now three centres of operation, one in

P. E. Island, conducted by a Committee of Presbytery there, another in River John, managed by a Committee, of which the Rev. H. B. McKay is convener, and the third in Onslow, by a committee of which Mr. Baxter is chairman.

We have no recent information respecting the work carried on in the Island, and shall therefore pass on to notice that two Colporteurs have been engaged by the second committee named, with permission granted to the Colporteurs to choose the season best adapted to travel, and when they can be absent at least sacrifice. Messrs. Maxwell and Lauder have undertaken and prosecuted the work within the Presbyteries of Pictou and Tatamagouche, rather from the love of the work than from the expectation of pecuniary remuneration. The result of their work has been the circulation of many copies of the Scriptures with metrical psalms and paraphrases as issued by the National Bible Society of Scotland as well as of religious publications of various kinds. In one tour, from River John to Goldenville, a Colporteur visited 625 families, offered prayer in 62 houses, sold 197 volumes, 97 Bibles, and 700 pages of tracts.

The Colchester Committee whose bounds extend west as far as they choose to go, even to New Brunswick, have had three agents employed, but in this case as in the last, only during a portion of the time, and for the same reason, that the remuneration which from their limited means, they can offer, will not enable their agents to continue during all seasons. But there is a greater evil than this arising from the want of pecuniary support. The Colporteurs having to depend on their sales for remuneration, are under the necessity of avoiding the poorer districts, where they are most needed, and of spending the chief portion of their time where their services though useful, might be dispensed with.

In this respect, the British American Book and Tract Society has a very decided advantage, in possessing a large revenue of free contributions amounting during the past year to \$3,000, which will enable them to do a much larger amount of good.