

and established on good farm land, where a large number of the inmates may be taught farming; that a thorough re-organization of the Womens' Reformatory will be made; that the girls in the Girls' Refuge will be removed from the contaminating influence of the Womens' Reformatory, and that larger accommodation will be provided for weak minded women who require to be secluded from society. Pleasure was expressed that within the last two years three county pothouses had been established, making thirteen in all now in operation in Ontario. Satisfaction was also expressed at the fact that during the past year a step had been taken in the Toronto Jail looking towards the gradual introduction of the separate system of confinement for young and first offenders. Attention, however, was called to "the abuse of sending the aged and destitute poor to jail instead of providing for them in an industrial home, and by sending drunkards to jail on short sentences instead of to an hospital for inebriation. The report of the practical work of the association was very satisfactory, and showed that a large number had been assisted. There had been 278,000 pages of literature printed during the year, the greater part of which had been distributed."

PURGING THE ROLL.

THIS is the season of the year when most Sessions feel it to be incumbent on them to purge their roll of membership so that the statistical returns which they are called on to make may as nearly as possible correspond to the facts. It is important that these should be accurate, and the only way to have them so is for the responsible parties carefully to revise from time to time the records on which they are based. Sometimes ministers have been unwilling to let the correct figures appear lest they should damage them in the estimation of the church by showing an apparent decline; but no honest minister can ever consent to have his reputation rest upon statistics which are fictitiously swollen by counting all additions and making no allowance for removals save those formally certified by letter. The only honorable course is to state the facts as they are.

But there is a higher and more pressing reason why Sessions should regularly perform this duty, and that is to bring up definitely the question of the spiritual standing of some of the communicants nominally on their roll. It is easy enough to deal with the names of those who are dead or who have for some time been absent from the bounds and whose place of residence is unknown. These may be struck off without any hesitation. But there is another class that cannot be so readily disposed of, that of those who are still within reach, but who have without any sufficient reason absented themselves from the sacraments of the church, and almost altogether from its services. They cannot be left on indefinitely with any decency and yet they cannot be struck off without process of some kind. What shall it be? This is perhaps the most difficult and delicate duty that ever confronts any Session and we fear that it is often shirked from want of courage to face it. The cause for the delinquency of the back-sliding member is commonly well enough known to the minister and the Session and they cannot plead ignorance. If he is poor and friendless they will generally make little difficulty about recommending the pastor to see him and warn him of his falling. But if he be rich, as he often is, and surrounded by a large connection of relatives in the church whom it is undesirable to offend, or if he be passionate and abusive in language it is about as hard to get the average Session to act as it

would be to make them face the cannon's mouth. This is undoubtedly the weak point in the discipline of many of our congregations and the secret of their unsatisfactory spiritual condition. To take hold of these cases and deal manfully with them would mean a spiritual revival such as they have never known and never will know without it.

Now we are not disposed to advocate what might be called violent or heroic measures. A long experience shows the wisdom of patience and careful deliberation in dealing with such cases. It would be easy enough to drive them out in anger and perhaps wreck the church in the process, but surely that ought to be the last resort. The Session should enter upon any action, not with the idea of driving them out, but of reclaiming them, and for this they will need all the wisdom and spirituality they possess. They must, of course, judge for themselves as to what is the best course to pursue. But we would suggest that first of all they should earnestly pray over these cases individually in their meetings until they themselves are in a right frame of mind to discuss them. After all the known facts have been frankly stated and looked at, let them appoint a deputation of two of the oldest, most godly and most respected of their number to see the offender and plead with him kindly and lovingly to amend his ways. Should these fail to make any satisfactory impression, let others be appointed for a second attempt until all reasonable means are exhausted. They will not always succeed; but often they will have the unspeakable joy of bringing back the erring one to the Master's fold. And should they feel under the necessity of removing the name, after such steps have been taken, they will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that it was not done hastily or without an honest effort to avoid the painful necessity.

SOUL SAVING.

GENERAL Booth of the Salvation Army is now again on a visit to this country for the purpose of inspecting the local organizations and securing as much sympathy and support as he can possibly get from the regularly organized churches. There are a good many things in which we differ from General Booth, and a good many things connected with the organization of the Salvation Army of which we can in no way approve. Nor do we think that organization will be able to continue permanently along its present lines. But there is one thing that must commend itself to every one who is truly in sympathy with the Gospel, and that is the persistency with which they keep the saving of fallen men and women before them as the one great end for which they exist. Not only have they kept this idea uppermost in their services, but they have shown a splendid courage in undertaking the establishment and maintenance of a large number of rescue homes for the most destitute and degraded, where these may come under saving influences. For this work they deserve more support than they are ever likely to get from the general public. But it must not be imagined that there is no soul saving work left for the churches to do. The churches rightly have regard to the edifying of their members through instruction in Bible truth, and to the education of the young along right lines. But a church that confines itself wholly to these objects will soon perish from spiritual dry rot. There are in every congregation these who are unsaved. They are not ignorant of the truth, but they have never owned its power and are held by sin. There are many more outside the churches who have fallen into neglect of religion