

inhabitant of the Dominion may be without a copy of the Bible. The operations of these societies have been extending rapidly, during the past few years. The opening up of the great North-West affords a largely increased field for their special work. The premises in which the business of the Bible and the Tract and Book Societies is carried on, though centrally placed, have now become, through age and dilapidation, altogether unsuited for the purposes of these institutions.

Their successive boards of directors may justly be described as judicious and economical. The present board have no intention of departing from the policy of their predecessors; yet they have not unwisely come to the conclusion that it would be decidedly better to erect new and suitable buildings, instead of spending money lavishly on repairs that could never be made satisfactorily on the present building. The directors have resolved that the funds contributed for the special work of the Societies shall not be diverted from the purposes for which they were given. They intend soon to make an appeal to the citizens of Toronto, and to all others throughout the Province interested in the important objects for which these Societies exist. The catholicity of the institutions, valuable work already done, and the wide fields of usefulness opening up before them, will commend the appeal, when made, to a generous, a cordial, and a liberal response.

THE PASSION PLAY.

AT Ober-Ammergau, in Germany, every few years the Passion play is performed. The most sacred incidents in the crucifixion are reproduced in spectacular form before vast crowds. The Saviour and all who were prominently associated with the world-event that transpired on Calvary are personated. Thousands gather from the surrounding country to witness this performance. Summer tourists, many of them from this continent, flock in large numbers to see the Ober-Ammergau Passion play, a relic of the mediæval miracle plays, common over all Europe. These travesties of sacred things shocked right thinking people, even in those days when education was so much neglected. The revival of learning, and the spread of the Reformation caused them to fall into general neglect, and they were discontinued. Here and there they lingered on for a time, but at Ober-Ammergau antiquarian interest has retained the practice to the present day.

After the last performance there was an attempt to reproduce the Passion play in New York, but so great was the opposition encountered that its projectors gave way for the time, the authorities refusing to permit the exhibition. Another attempt is now being made to place the play upon the boards. A motley company of players has been gathered together, and their roles assigned them; significantly enough the part of the Saviour has been allotted to a renegade clergyman. This outrage on Christian feeling has been met by a vigorous remonstrance on the part of representatives of nearly all forms of religious belief. The promoter of the enterprise is one Salvi Morse, a Jew, but the better class of the Hebrew people and press have joined in deprecating this attempt to bring out the Passion play. It need hardly be said that the various evangelical churches in New York have joined in an appeal to the mayor to withhold a license from the hall where the performance is contemplated. The principal daily journals have spoken out plainly against the purpose of this avaricious Israelite. It is sad beyond expression to witness such a display of the mammon spirit that would prompt a man solely for the sordid love of gain to make a spectacle of what so many millions hold in deepest reverence. Let us hope that this daring scheme of impiety will be frustrated, if not by authoritative prohibition, then, at all events, by the indignant protest that such a profanation justly evokes.

THE Prince Albert mission station intends to petition Manitoba Presbytery for erection into a congregation. The attendance at the Sabbath services, especially in the evening, is now so large that a new church building is in contemplation.

REV. R. L. FRASER, Claude P. O., Ont., would feel greatly obliged if some Sabbath school scholar having a copy of "Sabbath School Presbyterian" for September and October would mail one or both numbers to him. He is specially anxious to have them, and the editor has none left.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.

THE MORRIN COLLEGE REVIEW.—The first number of this Academic venture has reached us. More pretentious undertakings have been ushered into life under less favourable auspices. It has a numerous editorial staff who doubtless will make the magazine issuing from the venerable seat of learning in Quebec, a sparkling and welcome visitor to its many friends. To the promoters of this latest aspirant to journalistic fame we wish success, and, in a phrase now classic on this continent, we say, go-ahead.

STORIES OF DISCOVERY. By Edward E. Hale. (Boston: Roberts Brothers; Toronto: Willing & Williamson.) The motive in which this book originated is praiseworthy. The author in company with kindred minds observing the avidity with which boys read all kinds of stories that narrate thrilling adventures, and the harm that so often comes to them from the perusal of the wretched fictions that so plentifully superabound, came to the philosophic conclusion that most boys would as readily read a good book as a bad, a true narrative rather than a fictitious one. The result of the conference was a series of boys' books thoroughly health in tone, and true to ascertained fact. It is to be hoped that this laudable experiment will amply justify the anticipations of the projectors. Young readers cannot fail to acquire a large fund of reliable information from first sources in the handsome volume now before us. The discoveries of the great voyagers, for the most part narrated in their own words, is presented to the reader. The wonders and perils of arctic and antarctic exploration are told with fascinating interest. The trials and triumphs of the modern African travellers are recorded. Here also the achievements of trappers in the far west are detailed in such a manner that a young reader can easily imagine himself an eye witness of the thrilling scenes of that adventurous mode of life. He who places a book of this stamp in the hands of a voracious young reader is a real benefactor.

THE BIBLICAL MUSEUM. By James Comper Gray. (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co; Toronto: Willing & Williamson.)—The protracted, faithful, and painstaking labour of Mr. Gray will save a great amount of labour to many ministers and Sabbath-school teachers. There are numerous labour-saving helps that Christian instructors would be much better without, because they only encourage indolence, and fail to stimulate independent thinking. These volumes fortunately cannot be so used. They will help only those who help themselves. To those whose time for independent research, and whose means are limited, this admirable work will be a great boon. It is a monument of the author's industry and clear perception of the accumulated results of Biblical study. These results he places at the disposal of many to whom they will prove a valuable storehouse of material for actual and practical Christian teaching. Mr. Gray's work is presented in a very condensed, yet clear form. His plan consists in giving exegetical, homiletic, illustrative and comprehensive marginal notes, the latter including chronological, analytical, Biblical and literary references, which the student will find very serviceable. The volumes are handy and of convenient size. The Old Testament division is to consist of eight volumes, and the New is already completed in five. Copious indices will render "The Biblical Museum" complete. The work is inexpensively, though well got up. There is no reprinting of the text to add to the cost, and the most is made in the way of condensation by the use of abbreviation, which will be no obstacle to the student. Without exception, this is the most complete and most useful work of the kind yet published. Its extensive circulation and warm appreciation may be confidently predicted.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SCOTTISH RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THEIR CAUSES. Sermons by Rev. John M. King, M.A., D.D. (Toronto: Willing & Williamson.) Sermons as a general rule are not at present assigned the first rank in popular literature. Sermon writers not a few when contemplating the publication of their productions, search for a catch title for the purpose of disguising the original character of the composition. Still it would be unjust to say that sermons are not welcomed by a large and intelligent class of readers. The discourses of many divines of this age have met a loving reception in thousands of homes. The fact is that a sermon to stand the ordeal of publication must be a good one. Dr. King without ostentation and without diffidence honestly puts the

word "sermons" conspicuously on the title page of this little work. These two sermons were preached before the Toronto St. Andrew's Society on the occasion of their annual celebrations in 1879 and 1882. It is not wonderful that the Scotchmen who heard them preached were anxious to possess them in permanent form. To the request for their publication Dr. King has very properly yielded. Those who have listened to their delivery can profitably peruse them again, while many more will find delight in reading the calm, impressive and philosophic analysis of the characteristics of Scottish religious life, and the inquiry into the causes in which they originate. The reader, if he knows aught of Scottish modes of religious thought and feeling, will be ready at once to concede the truth and aptness of the delineature. These discourses are written in a vigorous and limpid manner. The theme is Scotch, but the style is classic English. We can most heartily commend this brochure, not only to those who claim national kinship with the preacher, but to all who desire to see an appreciative and just estimate of that loving power that has made Scotland loved at home and revered abroad, and what is more to the point, much spiritual good will be derived from its perusal. It would be affectation to suppress the remark that "The Characteristics" is a fine specimen of the printer's art.

PEARLS OF THE FAITH, or Islam's Rosary. By Edwin Arnold, C.S.I. (Boston: Roberts Brothers; Toronto: Willing & Williamson.)—This volume completes the trilogy constructed by Edwin Arnold, out of the three prevalent Oriental beliefs, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islamism. The previous volume, "The Light of Asia," will rank highest in the reader's estimation. The nature of the subject, the boldness and subtlety of thought, and the requisite poetic beauty running through it, account for the favour with which it was so generally received, and will justify the preference it will continue to claim. The plan of the present work is somewhat different. Its purpose can best be described in the words of its author: "In the following pages of varied verse I have enumerated these ninety nine beautiful names"—[those given to Allah]—and appended to each—from the point of view of an Indian Mohammedan—some illustrative legend, tradition, record, or comment drawn from diverse Oriental sources; occasionally paraphrasing (as closely as possible) from the text of the Koran itself, or casting light upon it. In this way it seemed possible to present the general spirit of Islam under a new and not unacceptable form; since almost every religious idea of the Koran comes up in the long catalogue of attributives." This purpose Mr. Arnold has accomplished, and the result cannot fail to be deeply interesting and suggestive to thoughtful readers. The right hand of this true poet has lost none of its delicately beautiful touch. Passing from the great literary merit of this book, it might fairly be asked, what is its spiritual purport, what is its tendency? It would be by no means strange that an expiring faith, one that exercised a powerful sway over the minds and lives of millions, should evoke the sympathy of a poetic nature, that he should sing the ideal loveliness of the waning crescent. This however, is not Mr. Arnold's view. He, for one, does not profess to see the decay of Islam. The Ottoman Empire seems nearing its dissolution, and no doubt the religion of Mohammed will linger for a time, yet the day is coming when the last votaries of an earth-born faith will say, "O, Galilean, Thou hast conquered."

METTING OF COMMITTEE.

The Foreign Mission Committee, Western Section, met in Knox Church lecture room on Monday and Tuesday last, 27th and 28th ult. The Rev. Professor McLaren, Convener, presiding. There were twenty-one members present.

A large portion of the time was occupied in deliberating and deciding on matters connected with the mission in Central India, and in considering proposals respecting some of the mission property at Prince Albert, N. W. T., held by a Committee in trust for the benefit of the Indians living in that territory. On one of the days the ladies composing the Committee of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society held a conference with the Committee, during which explanations and suggestions were made bearing chiefly on the prosperity of that part of the work which is carried on by lady missionaries in Zenanas.

The Committee took steps towards the appointment of another missionary for China, and also another for India.