

About fifteen minutes after the congregation dispersed, Mrs. Bruin and her cub reappeared on the scene, and crossed a field about a stone's throw from the church. Had they hove in sight an hour sooner, my half sermon would have been still more abbreviated. Another vain pursuit, though it was the Sabbath, was engaged in by a few individuals.

The evening service at Dalston was held in a neat little church but recently erected. An attentive but not large congregation was present. I think the general opinion of the half sermon performance was very like the 'prentice boy's characterization of his board; "very good, what there was of it," and "plenty of it, such as it was." Congregations nowadays are fond of "shorts" as spiritual rations.

This is an outrageously hard field for any man to work, however robust he may be, and I cannot but think it was a mistake to add Dalston to Rugby and Edgar. Those two stations are quite enough for one man, and he will be a diligent labourer in the Lord's vineyard if he does them justice. The summer arrangement by which two students occupied four stations, Vespra being added to the three already named, worked very well, and I was glad to find that the young brethren who had recently left were held in high esteem. It is a pity this plan could not be continued, and the four stations worked by two men. I see that student Gerrie in last CANADIAN INDEPENDENT, recommends opening a cause in Orillia and connecting Rugby with it. This would give two men three services each every Sabbath, and necessitate as much outlay of missionary money as would suffice to nurse up Dalston and Vespra into self-support. There is no spiritual destitution in Orillia, and no loud call for starting a Congregational Church there. In Oro and Vespra we have a foothold, which can and ought to be maintained. Rugby and Edgar can support a minister, and I believe if missionary aid were given for a time to Dalston and Vespra, they would, ere long, be able to support a minister too. At these places we have church organizations and buildings; moreover we have assumed a denominational responsibility which we cannot honourably decline. Dalston I consider a very interesting field, and after discussing its features with my kind host, Mr. Young, the village postmaster, who is a warm and intelligent Congregationalist, I feel very anxious that an effort should be made to work it up. A religious excitement is blazing in the vicinity, which must soon burn itself out; and a thoroughly earnest judicious minister, could, I believe, with the Divine blessing, achieve great things among a people who, having passed through arctic and torrid experiences religiously, would be prepared to appreciate the temperate zone of Congregationalism.

Let me enter my earnest protest against three-service fields. I have laboured on such fields many

years in the past, but if I had my time over again I would set my face like a flint against all temptations to such over-work. No man can do his "level best" each time thrice a day. It is fatal to the highest development of ministerial efficiency, for our young men to be put to this kind of strain. I would prefer to give young ministers the task of preaching but once a day in the early part of their career to overtaking them. An old fable tells how the fox reproached the lioness for only having one cub in her litter; "Aye, Mrs. Fox," replied the lioness, "but you forget that my one is a lion." Three sermons a day will necessarily be weak, puny, wishy-washy things. A man can't put his whole soul into the morning sermon, for fear of playing out in the afternoon and evening. The true preacher will desire to throw his whole manhood into every sermon, and after one such effort he will need the afternoon to recuperate for another and even grander effort in the evening. To do his utmost and best, he had better keep away from the Sabbath school in the afternoon. "I have been young and now am old," and "I know whereof I affirm."

WILLIAM F.-CLARKE.

*Guelph, September 27, 1887.*

#### CONGREGATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND SOCIETY.

MR. EDITOR,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt, since the annual meeting, of the following sums for the Widows' and Orphans' branch: Hamilton Church Ladies' Sewing Society, \$25; Chebogue Church, \$5; Maxville Church, \$5; St. Elmo Church, \$3.35; Martintown, \$3.25; Granby Church Sunday School, \$4; in all, \$45.60. I have also great pleasure in acknowledging receipt of the handsome donation of \$100 for the Widows' and Orphans' branch endowment from Mr. John Macdonald, of Toronto, in fulfilment of his spontaneous offer made at the Union meeting in June.

I hope this generous gift from a Christian brother of another denomination will be the means of stimulating generosity amongst our own membership toward the Widows' and Orphans' branch.

I regret to notice a decided falling off in the subscriptions from churches for this object during the past twelve months.

This is causing the board of directors considerable anxiety, for the contributions from this source are absolutely necessary to supplement the income from interest on capital in order to make up the annuities payable to nine widows and six children at present on the fund. We have paid in annuities to widows and children almost \$13,000 since we began our work; and we hope the friends all over the Dominion will enable us to continue it with increased efficiency from year to year.

Only twenty-four churches sent contributions las