

London Missionary Society, and its celebration in London, have been events of much interest in the Christian world. The very large deficits in the case of nearly all the churches, reported at their annual gatherings early in the year, have been noticed and regretted by all who are concerned for the spread and upbuilding of Christ's Kingdom upon the earth, and the strenuous efforts made to lessen or avert them, and where they still exist to wipe them out altogether, are being watched with deep interest. The massacre of Armenians which has been going on for months, and attended with such pitiless cruelty and brutality, while Christian nations have stood helplessly looking on, makes one of the saddest pages of the year's history, and will in the future be looked back upon with sorrow and shame. The sudden outbreak of a war feeling and spirit in the United States against Britain, darkens the close of the year with clouds of portentous blackness, which happily have begun to break and clear away.

As between ourselves and our readers, notwithstanding very constant and most honest efforts on the part of those responsible for its management, we are very conscious of having fallen far below our ideal of what THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN might be. It is better for our readers that this should be so, than that we should imagine we have reached all that it is possible for us to attain to. With more cordial interest and support on the part of many, both ministers and people, who could help to make a religious journal both a means of larger benefit to the public, and of increasing their own usefulness by pen as well as voice, a great deal more could be done through our columns, not only to advance the cause of Presbyterianism, but that of Christ, by contributing to our columns, and by increasing our circulation. We here wish to extend our most grateful thanks to the large and increasing number of correspondents and contributors who have cheered us by words of encouragement, enriched our columns by articles written for our pages, and lightened our labours by their kind assistance, given often unasked, and scarcely ever asked in vain. We are thankful to have reached the close of another year with so little that has been a cause of pain, or annoyance, with so much that it is pleasant to look back upon, and that our relations with all, and they are many, both at home and abroad, with whom our work has brought us into contact, have been so happy. This is a ground of hope that by pursuing for the future the course which has been attended with so much that has been agreeable and useful in the past, will be a stimulus to greater effort for the good of our readers in the coming years. With this year we enter upon the twenty-fifth year of publication, by far the longest life that has ever been attained by any paper published in the interests of Presbyterianism west of Halifax. During the whole career of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN, its single aim has been to serve the Church, and be true and loyal to all its interests. How the Church has grown in this quarter of a century is well known to every intelligent Presbyterian, and among the many means which have led to this result, by the blessing of God, we claim with all modesty, but yet in all frankness, to occupy not the least important place. Our aim in the past, to serve the Church, is still our aim, and as years, and means, and facilities increase our power to attain this aim, it is our firm resolve constantly to pursue it and labour for its more full realization. With this object in view, aspiring and resolving so far as it is within our power, to do better work in eighteen ninety-six than in eighteen ninety-five, we again wish all our readers, and especially all our contributors, a Happy New Year, and many returns in the future of Happy New Years.

THE CHURCH AGENT.

ATTENTION has been drawn to this matter by an announcement made in another quarter, of a character so vague and obscure as to raise the questions: What does it mean? What is its object? This is surely a subject about which the Church has a right to get definite and precise information. Its interests are too vitally affected to justify its being kept in the dark. The circumstances are peculiar. Had this been a case of sudden and unexpected illness of Dr. Reid, and calling for instant and temporary provision to be made for carrying on his work, no one could object. But the precise emergency has arisen, which, at the time of the meeting of the General Assembly, it was an-

ticipated might arise, and for which it made provision by the appointment of a successor, in the person of Rev. Dr. Warden. Dr. Warden asked and received from the Assembly, time to consider his decision, and pledged himself, in conjunction with Dr. Reid, to see that no interest of the Church should suffer while his acceptance or declination was in abeyance. To this end an Advisory Finance Board was formed by order of the Assembly for certain specified purposes.

It is now an open secret that those infirmities of age which led Dr. Reid at last Assembly to ask to be relieved to a large extent of duties which he has so long and so well discharged, have of late greatly increased. To such an extent, indeed, that recently, it is understood, he communicated to the chairman of this Advisory Finance Committee his wish to be immediately relieved of all the work and responsibility of his office, and a meeting was called, accordingly, to take into consideration what steps should be taken. It is also understood that at its meeting, the Committee had before it the offer of Dr. Warden, which had been once and again made to Dr. Reid, of his willingness to go to Toronto at any time, and, pending his final answer, assume in part or entirely, according to his pledge given to the Church, the duties of the office to which he had been appointed. In these circumstances no course would appear so simple and natural, as for the Committee to act in the line of the Assembly's action, and accept of Dr. Warden's offer. This would evidently have been carrying out what it was the purpose of the Assembly should be done, in the event of what has happened taking place, namely, Dr. Reid's failing to be able longer to continue to discharge the duties of his office. But instead of this what is done? We are told that, "the conclusion arrived at was that in the meantime the work could be carried on satisfactorily by the office-staff already engaged upon it, with the assistance of the Finance Committee and Dr. Reid together as the controlling authority."

This is the vague and obscure announcement referred to. It suggests many things which do not need to be just now dwelt upon, but upon the face of it, it is evident that the purpose of the Assembly in appointing this Committee was not that, if Dr. Reid became unequal to his many and onerous duties, the Advisory Finance Board should assume them, or appoint any person to the place he has so long filled. Its duties are defined thus (Assembly Minutes, p. 49): "Under whose oversight any change in the manner of keeping the books, deemed necessary, would be made, and in connection with which investments be made, and by whom matters of finance generally would be supervised and authorized." These are the duties laid down for it, and with all deference we submit that, with the action of the Assembly before it, and Dr. Warden's offer before it, the course taken is not in the spirit of the Assembly's action in the appointment of this Board, and they were not empowered to do what has been done.

It is well known, besides, that the duties of the Church Agent's office from this time on till the meeting of the General Assembly are very heavy. The office-staff of Dr. Reid, and the only office-staff of his department known to the Church, is one assistant. It may be supposed that he is "already engaged" in the duties of his office. Is he to do the whole work, or what is the assistance the Finance Committee is giving him? Dr. Reid has not been so inconsiderable a personality in the administration of the Church's affairs, nor have the duties of his office been considered to be so immaterial, as that any person could easily at once assume and discharge them properly. Dr. Warden's experience and ability are so well known and prized throughout the Church that he was appointed by it to this place, and all this is set aside for some arrangement the Church knows nothing about. The advantage it would be also to Dr. Warden, should he finally accept the appointment of the Assembly, to be in the office a few months, and become acquainted with its work, and as preparatory to making up the important financial reports to be laid before the Assembly is obvious. Why should he be deprived of this advantage, and why should the Church be deprived of his valuable services at this juncture, in the position to which he has been called, especially when that very emergency has arisen to meet which his appointment was made by the General Assembly? More light is wanted; the whole Church is interested in having, and is entitled to get, the fullest light upon this matter.

Books and Magazines.

SAMANTHA IN EUROPE. By Josiah Allen's Wife. Illustrated by S. De Granin. Funk & Wagnalls Company, New York.

Josiah Allen's Wife is already well known to a host of readers. In this new book they will find the familiar places visited by all travellers described in the peculiar Samantha Allen style, from which will be got many a good laugh. The tour covers Great Britain and Ireland and the continent of Europe, and so affords ample scope for the exercise of the style of humorous description peculiar to Josiah Allen's Wife, all which is helped by a great number of apt illustrations.

A MESSAGE FOR THE DAY. A Year's Daily Reading. By J. R. Miller, D.D., author of "Silent Times," etc. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 27 Paternoster Row. Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company.

Dr. Miller is one of our best known religious writers, and his works are pre-eminently of a most practical character, and are at the same time most pleasing in style. This volume contains a brief reading for every day of the year, extending only to one small page, and founded upon some text of Scripture. The matter of the book is most excellent, and will be highly prized by the Christian reader, besides being most convenient in size for use, and attractive in appearance. As a gift-book for the sick room, or at the beginning of the year to a Christian friend, nothing could be more appropriate.

ALONE WITH GOD. "CHILDREN DYING IN INFANCY," and Other Sermons. By Rev. David Mitchell, recent pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian Church, Jersey City, N. J. Albert Datz, 87 Railroad Avenue, Jersey City.

This book has a pathetic interest from its being a "Memorial Volume," "in memory of ten years' happy experience as pastor and people," from which the author retired with impaired health, and because of its being associated with the sudden death by accident of a beloved son. It will also be of special interest to many in our church, because of the connection with it for some years of Mr. Mitchell as one of our ministers. It consists of fourteen sermons, all of them on subjects of every day, practical interest and importance. Some of the subjects are "Children Dying in Infancy," "The Bible and Higher Critics," "The Transfiguration," "Holiday or Holy Day—Which?" a discussion of the Sabbath-rest question; "Too Many Churches," "Marriage," "Learning by Experience." The treatment is simple, practical and usefulness is evidently aimed at throughout. The style is clear, direct and graceful and the whole work is calculated to be helpful and profitable.

Godey's Magazine announces a prize of fifty dollars for the best short story in which the bicycle plays an important part. MSS. should be between three and four thousand words long, and must be received by February 1st. The Godey Company, New York, will furnish further particulars of the competition.

Christmas-Tide brings no visitor more welcome than the special Christmas Number of *The Youth's Companion*. Original, bright and striking, it is filled with a feast of good things, bringing pleasures alike to young and old. To the entire home circles its weekly visits are a source of pleasure and profit. There is no more fitting or more attractive design for the Christmas-time than the star—"The Guiding Star of the East"—with its outreaching rays, which has been adopted for the handsome cover of this issue.

Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly for January is illustrated with more than one hundred up-to-date pictures by the best illustrators of America and Europe. The leading article, upon "Great Ship Canals," describes the world's principal artificial waterways of the present day. "A Bygone Bohemia," is a most interesting chapter of reminiscences of the famous coterie of wits, writers, poets and players who brought celebrity to Pfaff's resort, in New York City, a generation back. The usual number of varied and interesting stories, articles and poems serve to sustain the reputation of this meritorious publication.

McClure's Magazine for January is to have an article giving the whole story (never yet published, but long desired by the public) of Mr. Blaine's relation to his own candidacy for the presidency in 1884. It is written by Murat Halstead, whose opportunity for knowing all the facts was unequalled; and it embodies conversations with Blaine and an important unpublished letter written by him a few days after his defeat. Some very interesting portraits will accompany the article, and the Blaine letter will be reproduced in facsimile.

Godey's Magazine has brought out another novelty for the January issue, in the shape of a Woman's Number. All the articles, stories, and poems in it are either by or about women. If anyone thinks, however, that the magazine is less interesting on this account let them read of how Mrs. Blackman, secretary of the Police Board of Leavenworth, handled a Coxey "army," and the experience of Mrs. Ames as deputy sheriff in Illinois; or of the ingenious accomplishments of women, told in "Women Inventors," or Mrs. Martha McCulloch Williams' charming piece of fiction, "Pyramus and Thisbe." In cover, illustrations, fashion department, and all the familiar features, the customary standard is maintained. [The Godey Company, 52-54 Lafayette Place, New York.]