

been put into circulation, throughout the length and breadth of Nova Scotia, P. E. Island, Cape Breton, and some of the adjacent counties of New Brunswick, so that you can scarcely enter the house of any Presbyterian, or even of any Protestant, without observing some of the fruits of our labours. These, by the blessing of the King and Head of the Church, we hope and pray may be useful not only to the present but many future generations. Gladly will we continue our work and labour of love while able, if the patronage of the Synod and friends of the cause in general be continued. But there are some obstacles at present in the way, at least of extending our operations, to which it may be proper briefly to refer. The first of these is the general scarcity of the circulating medium. Many are found who earnestly desire the books but have not wherewithal to purchase, though otherwise in comfortable circumstances. The next and great difficulty is the want of capital. The small amount (£21), raised by several contributions and donations, has not been idle. But we have been dealing on the credit system during the eight years of our operations, to the extent of about £4500; and notwithstanding the good that has been done under this system, the disadvantages and difficulties are very evident. We are not able, for example, to buy in the cheapest market; for that requires ready money, and we often cannot obtain the most modern and popular works of the day for the same reason; and consequently our sales are more limited than otherwise they would be, which is very discouraging to the colporteurs. One might suppose indeed that our supply was sufficiently varied for ordinary readers. The catalogue of the "Board" now numbers over 500 volumes, and "Carter's" perhaps as many, and we obtain a few others from other sources, which would seem to be a sufficient variety for the general reader; not one in fifty of whom possess

more than one or two per cent of this supply, yet such is human nature, even when sanctified by divine grace, that, like the Athenians of old, it will still be hankering after *something new*. This disposition, as far as consistent with duty, we endeavour to gratify, lest it should be directed to light reading of a fascinating nature and immoral tendency, which was creeping upon us.— Now if the Synod would recommend and use its influence to enable us to carry out any amelioration of these difficulties, which by a little zeal and generosity on the part of its members it is perfectly able to do; much more good might yet be done, for there is ample scope for enlargement and the hand of the colporteurs would be strengthened and their hearts encouraged, who have the most laborious part of the work to perform. Some such amelioration and encouragement they need, as the difficulties referred to bear hard upon them, and under the present system the further progress of the work depends entirely under providence upon their diligence and perseverance. Some such amelioration and encouragement the importance of the work requires, which, in our humble opinion, ought to be classed with the missionary and educational schemes of the church as it is elsewhere, notwithstanding the coolness and indifference of some of the brethren, of whom better things might have been expected. We are not without hopes, however that the union with the Free Church, now in all human appearance about to be consummated, will operate in favour of the cause, though in the appointment of colporteurs and assigning them spheres of labour we have never made any distinction amongst all the Presbyterian churches of this Province.

All which is respectfully submitted.

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Con. Com. Colportage.

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