

various congregations. This information was based upon the allocations made to the different schemes. Sometimes this corresponded with the amount actually received by the Church agent. Sometimes it did not. The schedule is now prepared by the Church agent, and is compiled from his books, giving the exact amount received each year from the several congregations of the Presbyteries.

The tabulation of changes in the roll of Presbyteries supplies a long-felt want. At present there is no recognized method of keeping an historical roll, somewhat more detailed than that of the proposed schedule, but the work has been undertaken entirely upon his own responsibility. There should be such an historical record, in easily accessible form, for each Presbytery. The tabulation proposed is a long step in the direction of such a record, and we trust, will lead to other and more complete records being attempted.

We pass the remaining schedules, which deal with the Theological Colleges, the Home Mission fields, the Augmented Congregations, the Foreign Mission Fields, and French Evangelisation, in the order named, to say a word in commendation of the ninth and last. Here it is proposed to present, in compact form, a comparative view of the work of the church for the decade then passing. Such a comparison will be of inestimable value. No such comparison could now be made, unless one had six months at command in which to search out the materials for it. Here, compiled year by year, it will be obtainable at a glance.

The schedules are not perfect, but we advocate the good features, and they are many. With the adoption and employment of these new forms other features now lacking, will gradually be added, till we have, what we need much in this busy age, information at hand to which we may refer in a moment, and upon which it may implicitly rely.

### Religion and Insanity.

This subject, which was touched upon in a recent issue, has been raised again in other quarters and in different forms. (See *The Literary Digest*, Jan. 14th. The form is narrower, even this: "Does the Doctrine of Eternal Damnation lead to Insanity?" Dr. Selden H. Talcott, Middletown, N. Y., maintains that the preaching of this doctrine to children does lead to this sad condition. "The church is sometimes the vestibule of the insane asylum. Children should not be frightened into religion, nor should so-called religious education be driven into them. Worry and insomnia, arrest of mental development, and then unreality are the results." He advises purest religion to the young in the form of a new commandment, a glorious inspiration to be good and do good. This report called forth a storm of protests among clergymen. Some sided with

the doctor in whole or in part, other doctors took part in the discussion and the *New York Herald* said some good things. Dr. George F. Shraley, agreeing with this journal, pointed out that "religious insanity is more prevalent among negroes than whites. There are forty per cent. of negroes to twenty-five per cent. of whites who become demented through religious excitement. Those who have witnessed the scenes at a colored camp-meeting will understand what I mean. Wild, unnatural features of so-called religious exhortation should be avoided by the churches."

Dr. Charles F. Macdonald, former president of the New York Commission on Lunacy, and with an experience of nearly thirty years as an alienist said he had found comparatively few cases of insanity with religious excitement as the primary cause.

"That cases of insanity do occasionally arise from excessive religious zeal and excitement I think there can be no question. There, however, are exceptional instances, and in nine out of ten of the many cases which I have personally investigated in which religious excitement was regarded as the causative factor, I have found that the morbid mental symptoms which marked the onset of the disease—namely, religious excitement—had been mistakenly regarded as the cause."

Such errors respecting the cause of the disease are common. He agrees with Dr. Talcott that the young should not be tormented by excessive appeals to their fears; he puts the matter, however, in this qualified form:

"I can understand how excessive religious devotion might act as an exciting cause of insanity in individuals who are predisposed thereto, whether through inheritance or otherwise."

"And this may be said of excessive indulgence of any kind. In my opinion, it is only this class of individuals who are likely to be uniformly affected by excessive religious zeal or excitement."

"It should be borne in mind that the immediate and direct cause of insanity is a condition of mal-nutrition of the brain and nervous system, no matter what the underlying conditions may be."

An "Old Pastor," a pathetic story translated from the German, by Rev. R. J. Craig, B.D., of Kingston, will appear in an early issue of *The Dominion Presbyterian*.

### The Public School Teacher.

Few have taken time to estimate the influence exercised by the rural public school teacher upon the children of the community. For at least six hours of the day, for five days of the week they are under the personal supervision of the teacher, and for at least two additional hours each day they are preparing the exercises and lessons set by the teacher. Into all this work the personality of the teacher enters, and is impressing itself to some extent upon the mind of each pupil. Character is then, for the pupil, in its formative stage, and an impression received at this time, especially if deeply imprinted by repeti-

tion, will remain throughout life. A taste or distaste for the work of a master in literature, in art, in sciences, in moral teaching, may readily be created then by some well-advised, or ill-advised, words of the teacher, or by some injudicious use of the work of any one of these masters. We have not yet conquered a dislike for Cowper's "Task," and for Wordsworth's "Excursion," because a teacher assigned a selection from each as a penalty when we were about nine years of age. Had the somewhat whimsical purpose of the former, or even the more serious aim of the latter, been explained to us, even a nine years' boy writing a penalty would have found some interest in his task, and might have been saved the conquering of a strong prejudice against all the work of these masters in after years.

The love for the work of the great literary master is but one of the elevating tendencies within the power of the teacher to create and foster. Every circle of knowledge offers others. Let the teacher's office be magnified, both to those who teach, and by those whose children come under the influence of the teacher.

### Two Wholesome Stories.

In the Heart of the Hills; or, the Little Preacher of the Pacific Slope, by Hattie E. Colter.

The Treasure Care of the Blue Mountains, by Orliphant Smeaton, illustrated by Joseph Brown. (Orliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh and London.)

Of course, anything that comes from this firm is pure literature; it may not be in every case a work of genius, that is not expected from any publishing house; but there is one thing certain, that, so far as our somewhat large experience goes, Messrs. Orliphant, Anderson & Ferrier never sends out a book with any uncleanliness in it. In these days fiction forms a large part of the reading of the general public. It is generally admitted that to indulge in wholesale denunciation of "novels" is both foolish and useless. Under that name, some of the noblest, most inspiring works of art have to be classed, as well as some of the most unsettling and harmful of books. In these days many people learn their geography, natural science and new theology from books that are cast in the form of stories. The two volumes before us are bright, readable stories, not tracts in disguise, though some might bring that charge against Miss Colter's work. It is the story of a young lady who has a beautiful face and an angelic spirit. She goes out to work among the miners, and so hears "the little preacher of the Pacific Slope." The impression it leaves is that of the real power exerted by the presence of a pure, gentle woman. We do not meet in it the rollicking "Dukes" and "Shovins" of Ralph Connor's stories, neither do we hear the strange lingo of the camp. Perhaps a little more "surprise power" might have been used. We felt certain before we had read many pages that "the little preacher" would marry the millionaire proprietor of the mines, and turn him to philanthropic purposes. We can recommend the story, especially to our young lady readers. Mr. Smeaton's story is for the boys, but we feel sure the girls will enjoy it, and the "older boys" also. There are a strange, wild things in it, which may be improbable, but are none the less interesting to read about. It has not the sensationalism of Rider Haggard, and we would not like to say that it has the genius of Stevenson, but it is alive, and boys may enjoy the fights and the critical situations without being the worse for this taste of strange adventures.

The subscription price of *The Dominion Presbyterian* is ONE DOLLAR till 1st January, 1900. Within the Montreal postal delivery district, where a special rate for delivery is charged, the price will be \$1.50.