

PRESBYTERIANISM IN NEW ZEALAND.

THE last number of the New Zealand *Presbyterian*, published in Dunedin, contains an outline report of the meeting held in that city of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland. It is interesting, not only as giving evidence of the prosperity of the Church in that far off land, but in showing, from the questions that came up for consideration as well as from the modes of procedure, that there is an unmistakable family likeness in the Presbyterian Churches throughout the world. This branch of the Church which met in Synod at Dunedin is not very large, but it is evidently in a healthy and vigorous condition. It embraces five Presbyteries, which sent thirty-four clerical and fifty-eight lay representatives. In this representation we see a slight improvement over what has too long been customary amongst ourselves. Our Church Courts would show a much greater disparity between lay and clerical representation. The proportion was well kept up in all the Presbyteries represented. One had twenty-two ministers and twenty elders; a second, fourteen ministers and thirteen elders; a third, eighteen ministers, fifteen elders; a fourth sent nine of the former and seven of the latter, while the fifth had five ministers and three elders, the Synod thus comprising 122 members.

It seems to be the custom in that Synod for the retiring Moderator to nominate his successor. At all events the Rev. James Baird, of Winton, delivering a brief address, on vacating the Moderator's chair, nominated the Rev. George Hall, B.A., of Waiholo, to succeed him. The nomination was heartily received, and Mr. Hall was unanimously elected. He had spent a number of years in missionary service in India, and is deeply interested in Christian missions everywhere. At the outset of his stirring and comprehensive opening address he said: "This proof of your confidence I value very highly, and regard it as a recognition of the thirty years of labour as a missionary to the heathen, which preceded my coming to Otago—not yet nine years ago. And at once I would bespeak your forbearance and help, as the greatest portion of my life has been spent among the heathen in India, where such meetings as the present cannot yet be held. I am more familiar with the institutes of Manu, the great Hindu legislator, than with Moncrieff's rules for the guidance of Church Courts." In these circumstances it was natural and expedient that his address should be occupied with a consideration of Foreign Missions. It was his desire to see in all other congregations the cultivation of a missionary spirit, not only for the direct good that would thereby be accomplished, but as an important means for the advancement of spiritual life. The Moderator's address is brimful of cheering and inspiring facts relating to the progress of the Gospel in heathen lands. Reference was made to the missionary revival that is spreading over all sections of the Evangelical Church, and he dealt very effectively with the recent cry that missions are a failure. He was able to demonstrate from the plain regions of facts and figures that Christianity had been advanced by missionary effort to an extent that querulous critics had never dreamed.

The questions that came up for consideration were much the same as those that occupy our own Synods and Assembly, and the modes in which they were discussed and disposed of were such that if any of our ministers had dropped in upon their brethren assembled at Dunedin, they would have found themselves perfectly at home, and would have been prepared to take an intelligent part in the various discussions. The report on the State of Religion was not unlike, both in structure and tone, what is usually presented by our own Conveners. There were several things mentioned in the report that were encouraging and hopeful, but the indifference of the young and the dropping away of the working class from the services of the Church, shaded the encouraging features otherwise discernible. The discussion that followed was outspoken and free, and there were some differences of opinion as to the best methods that ought to be adopted to counteract the acknowledged evils. Their Home Mission field does not appear to be very large, but much attention is given to the work of church extension. So far as appears on the surface, the finances of this department are in a healthy condition. The income reported for the past year was about \$5,125, and the expenditure was within that sum. They have a Sustentation Fund which last year yielded \$1,035 to each settled pastor. The liberality of the New Zealand Church surpasses the Canadian in this respect.

Temperance, the Bible in Public Schools, and Confessional Revision are questions that engage the

interest of the brethren in New Zealand. Respecting the first-named subject the report says:

The Rev. James Chisholm, who has acted as Convener of the Temperance Committee for several years, has brought the subject of Temperance before the Synod in an able and impressive manner. While showing that the cause is making progress, he allows that there are indications here and there of considerable slackness in the use of means. The ministers and Sabbath school teachers are in earnest in commending the principles and practice of temperance. There is reason to believe that our young men are in the main on the side of temperance, and especially our children. May his successor in the Convenership of the committee be as wholehearted in the advocacy of temperance, and victory will in due course follow.

The Bill relating to Religious Education rejected at the last session of the Legislature is to be re-introduced. It provides for daily reading of the Bible or Scriptural selections in the public schools at the option of the respective district school committees, and subject to a conscience clause. This is the mind of the Synod on the subject:

The committee recommend the Synod to instruct the Presbyteries, in the event of this bill not being passed into law by the present Parliament, to appoint deputies to visit the districts within the bounds before the next general election, and in co-operation with the various denominations seek to excite such interest in the subject as may lead the people to press upon the attention of candidates for election to Parliament the propriety of supporting a bill to secure the daily reading of the Bible in the schools.

In the matter of Revision the discussion was evidently one in which a keen interest was taken. There was a proposal to adopt the Declaratory Act of the Scottish United Presbyterian Church, but an amendment to lay the motion on the table till it is seen what other branches of the Presbyterian Church might do in the premises, was finally carried.

There has been a substantial increase in the membership and contributions of the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland during the year. There is an increase in the number of members of over 600, making a total of 11,754, and the year's income is about \$147,267. It is evident that this branch of the Church in that highly-favoured land is exercising, as it ought, a powerful influence for good.

Books and Magazines.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—This excellent magazine supplies its patrons weekly with entertaining, instructive and varied reading matter, finely and plentifully illustrated.

OUR LITTLE ONES AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.)—This bright monthly, so neat in form and artistically tasteful, continues to be as great a favourite with the little folks as ever.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.) This valuable weekly, which gives the latest and freshest contributions to current literature, recently entered on the sixty-ninth volume of the fifth series. It is a library in itself.

In a recent issue of D. Lothrop Company's circular of new publications, among many attractive volumes there is the announcement of one that will be specially interesting to all Canadian readers. It is "Stories of New France," by Miss A. M. Macfar and Thomas G. Marquis. "It is," says the circular, "a capital introduction to Canadian history."

ST. NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.)—The opening paper in the February number of this high class monthly for young readers tells in narrative and pictorial form the story of the great storm in which war vessels and gallant men perished off Apia in Samoa. The contents are varied and instructive and the illustrations good.

THE TREASURY FOR PASTOR AND PEOPLE. (New York: E. B. Treat.)—This monthly continues to supply clergymen and others with both timely and indispensable information on a great variety of subjects. The illustrations in the February number are the view of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, New York City, and the portrait of Rev. E. Walpole Warren, its rector, for whom as an immigrant the church was taxed \$1,000 under the labour contract law. In addition to the usual number of sermons and articles, there is the second of the series of articles on Living Issues by College Presidents on "How can Jesuitism be Successfully Met?" by Principal MacVicar of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, an article which should secure the earnest attention of every citizen.

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.)—A paper of unusual interest,

"Life Among the Congo Savages," by Herbert Ward, opens the February number of *Scribner's*. The first of two papers on "John Ericson the Engineer," by William Conant Church, with numerous illustrations is presented to the reader. Other papers sure to attract attention are, "A Day in Literary Madrid," by William Henry Bishop; "Through Three Civilizations," by W. H. Mallock; and "An Archaeological Discovery in Idaho." Harold Frederic and Octave Thanet continue their respective serials. Among the contributors to the number appears the name of Archibald Lampman, the Canadian poet.

DANGEROUS CHARACTERS. By Ella Rodman Church. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication; Toronto: N. T. Wilson.)—A new Elmridge book needs no further introduction than the simple announcement that it proceeds on the same line with those which have preceded it. It is not a scientific work or natural history; it professes to be only a series of pleasant conversations regarding animals, in which are given in a bright, familiar way many interesting facts about the nature and the habits of those animals. The present volume treats of such animals as wolves, bears, panthers, lions, tigers, leopards and others. Young people should early be taught to see the wisdom of God, as it is manifested in his wonderful works, instead of being allowed to hear, first of all, the atheistical teaching that science finds no place for God in His works. The book is fully illustrated.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—The February number of *Harper's* opens with a somewhat elaborate but clearly-written paper on the "Standing Army of Great Britain," by one who is in a position to speak with authority on the subject—General W. L. Seely. "Benvenuto Cellini," by Elizabeth Wormeley Latimer is very interesting and is rendered still more so by the engraved specimens of the rare artist's work with which it is illustrated. "Jamaica, Old and New," "The Lake Dwellers," "The New York Banks," "Nights and Days with De Quincey," "Talks with Edison," "A Majestic Literary Fossil," by Mark Twain, and a number of other papers, together with the serial and short stories, and poems make up a decidedly excellent number.

THE CENTURY. (New York: The Century Co.)—The issue for the present month is the mid-winter number, but, like the winter in these parts, there is very little snow and ice in it. The frontispiece is a portrait of Ralph Waldo Emerson as he appeared on the lecture platform. It is *apropos* of a paper on "Emerson's Talks with a College Boy," by Charles J. Woodbury. The first of a series of interesting descriptive papers by John La Farge, "An Artist's Letters from Japan," is begun. Joseph Jefferson's pleasingly-written autobiographical sketches are continued. "The Realm of the Congo," affords subjects for two papers by writers who are competent to tell what they have seen in equatorial Africa. The massive "Life of Abraham Lincoln" is concluded in this number. In permanent form this will doubtless occupy a place among the leading historical works of the century. Professor Fisher contributes the third paper on "The Nature and Methods of Revelation." The other contents of the number, including the serials by Amelia E. Barr and Frank R. Stockton are sure to be read with pleasure and profit.

THE MISSIONARY REVIEW OF THE WORLD. (New York: Funk and Wagnalls; Toronto: William Briggs.)—The leading paper of the number is by Rev. James Johnston, of London, on "Protestant Missions a Hundred Years Ago and Now." Dr. Pierson's first letter from Scotland is given, and will be read with intense interest. There is a very remarkable paper on "The Charities of Germany," by Dr. A. H. Bradford, which is instructive reading. Dr. Steele, of New South Wales, has a ringing article on "The Jubilee of the New Hebrides Mission." J. Hudson Taylor rings out a clarion appeal "To every Creature." Secretary Ellinwood sketches with skillful hand "The Credulity of Scepticism." Then follows a graphic picture of Pioneer Missionary Life in Alaska, which will thrill the reader. Dr. Starbuck gives another chapter of translations from the foreign missionary magazines. The literature section closes with an account of the student uprising and work. All the other seven departments are replete with facts, intelligence, correspondence, reports, International papers, Monthly Concert Matter, prepared by Dr. Ellinwood, and Editorial Notes on many live topics. On the whole, we doubt if a better number of this comprehensive and progressive Review has been published.