

good in moulding the character of this Dominion, while retaining its substance, must, by free discussion and being looked at from all points, be ready to adapt itself to new phases of thought and new conditions of life. For such work the press and not the pulpit is the appropriate vehicle. No branch of the Church is more highly favoured than our own with pious, educated and well-informed clergymen and laymen, and at the beginning of another year we open our columns and again invite the best men to give their best thoughts for the benefit of the Church and of all the manifold, important interests inseparably bound up with it. And so the close of one year and the beginning of another presents a fresh call for strenuous labour in the noblest of all fields. Let us by a calm, patient and comprehensive study of the past, strive to reach to nobler and higher achievements in the future. In the year which lies before us every department of our work is capable of expansion and improvement. For this we invite all who love our Church to strive and labour together. Let this be a year of manful, earnest work in her service and constant prayer, so that all who are spared to see the end of 1894, may find her individual members and the whole body of the Church stronger, purer, more consecrated to the noblest service given by God to man than they were at the beginning.

### SHALL WE HAVE A DEFICIT?

IT is with real concern that we learn there is great fear felt by the officers of the church and conveners of our large committees who are in the best position to judge, that this year's operations of our church are likely to close with a large deficit in some important departments of our work. It may be said this is an old story, but though in the goodness of God, the fears of the church in this respect have often been disappointed, those at all aware of the state of business of almost all kinds in the country generally, know that this year there is much better ground for fearing that these anticipations of deficit will be realized than there has often been. This, therefore, is no cry of "wolf, wolf." We would ask our readers to devote a few minutes, quiet, grave thought to what a deficit means to our church, and who they are that will be most deeply affected by it. They are, for the most part, the aged and infirm fathers and mothers in Israel, who have borne the burden and heat of the day, until they could bear it no longer and are now laid aside. They are those whom the hand of sickness has enfeebled. They are the wives and families of our hard-toiling home and foreign missionaries, laboring in isolation, in season and out of season, among their flocks scattered in distant lands, on our frontiers from the Atlantic to the Pacific, in the woods, on the prairie, and in the mountains and glens of British Columbia. To all these a deficit, even should it be but small, means something very serious. It does not mean the cutting off of luxuries, for of these, in very many cases, they have not any. It means a little more pinching, a little more cutting down of things, which to a minister and his family are absolute necessities, decent clothing, a sufficiency of nourishing food for themselves and wherewith to exercise hospitality, fuel, doing without books, magazines and papers to keep them in touch with the thought and doings of the day. It means anxieties heavy already, pressing a little more heavily, sleepless nights for fathers and mothers of little families whose wants come with every day and every hour. It means discouragement added to toils of the wife and mother at home, and of the father in his mission field, which are already, in many cases, overtaxing. There is another side to this, but one which we have no right to lay upon our brethren unnecessarily, faith strengthened by daily and hourly exercise until it is triumphant, glorying even in tribulations, and the joy of unlooked for deliverances in the providence of God. To our work it means an arrest to an extent which it may take years to recover, and the weakening of our hands for labor in all directions; it means unfaithfulness to duty and to our privileges, and dishonor to Christ.

Can our church possibly avoid all this? If it is possible it surely ought to be avoided. We believe that no one acquainted with the resources of our church will say that to avoid a deficit of a few, or even a good many thousands of dollars is an impossibility. It is possible by the exercise more generally of a very simple, but most Christian grace, self-denial, after the example of and flowing from love to Christ, who has died for us. Many of the most liberal givers of our church in proportion

to their means, the wage-earners, are already exercising a large amount of self-denial, so that if a deficit, which means so much that is most painful to contemplate, is to be avoided, it must be mainly by the extra givings of those whom God has blessed with abundance. A party or two less by all such, or an entire abandonment of them over the church for six months, without any sacrifice of real hospitality, would save thousands of dollars. Less costly articles of dress and furniture for the same length of time would save much. Self-denial in some book or books, or other articles of fancy or taste, and the cutting off entirely of some altogether unnecessary indulgences which we would not merely be as well, but better without, offers a wide field for self-denial, sufficient of itself to guard against all fear of a deficit. Let every one look at this matter honestly in the light of duty and privilege and ask, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits?" and if we listen to and act according to the promptings of the Spirit we shall have no deficit.

We publish in another column a letter from our superintendent of missions in the North-west, from which he has just returned, which we commend to the most serious attention of all our readers. We have heard from his lips tales of anxiety and struggle, and dark prospects of some of our self-sacrificing missionaries, because the misfortunes of their people have stripped them of their means to give, which are indeed distressing to listen to. Let all in the church who can in any way find the means come forward and share the burdens of these brethren by sending them timely relief. With what joy, what comfort, what encouragement, will it fill the hearts of all our laborers, at home and abroad, if the sincerity of our interest and our prayers, is at this juncture attested by such a measure of self-sacrifice and liberality, that no one of them will need to suffer the loss, for want of funds in the church's hands, of what they have been promised and have a right to expect. It is also of the utmost importance that work, upon which the church has already spent so much money and interest, and which is so full of promise for the future, should not suffer any arrest for the want of funds which are in the church's hands, and which as good stewards we ought now to come forward with and wisely invest in the interest of Him for whom we hold them in trust.

### AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND

(The following circular from the Convener and Secretary of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund makes very plain what urgent need there is for its generous support, as pointed out in our editorial columns last week.—ED.)

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—The committee on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund desire to call your attention to the necessities of the Fund, and the strong claims which it presents for the warm sympathy and support of the congregations of the Church. During the last ten years the number of annuities has increased from thirty-three to seventy-six (the present number on the list) much more than double, an increase which has been going on steadily without an adequate increase in the congregational collections. Ten years ago the income from this source was about \$6,000, last year it did not reach quite \$8,600, whereas, to have been in the same proportion, or sufficient for the annuities, it should have been about \$14,000.

It must be remembered in connection with this question of income, that this year the committee will not have much, if any, help from the Hymnal Committee. Last year the income from this source was \$950. Then there was, last year, an extra amount from arrears of ministers' rates which cannot be expected this year.

Taking these things into account the necessity for an increase in congregational collections is very obvious. It is sometimes the case, that while the schemes considered more important obtain a fair amount of attention, the Aged Ministers' Fund has been put off with a small trifle, after the main division of the funds has been made; or from the supposition that its necessities were not great, a small sum has been deemed sufficient.

Where missionary associations exist the presentation of the facts, no doubt, will lead to a better apportionment, and it is hoped this will very generally be the case. Where no missionary association exists the collection is appointed for the third Sabbath in February, a time when, from the inclement weather and bad roads, small audiences are found in the rural districts, and consequently small collections.

Last year over two hundred and fifty congregations gave no collection. Surely it is not asking too much that each congregation be requested to contribute something to this worthy fund.

The committee appeals to you to make such arrangements as will meet the requirements of the case, and save the committee from the necessity of reducing the annuities.

J. K. MACDONALD,  
Convener.

W. BURNS,  
Secretary.

### Books and Magazines.

THE COVENANTERS OF THE MERSE: THEIR HISTORY AND SUFFERINGS, AS FOUND IN THE RECORDS OF THAT TIME. By the Rev. J. Wood Brown, M.A., Gordon. Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier.

This compact little volume of some two hundred and fifty pages merits a much fuller notice than we are at present able to give it. It is an exceedingly interesting and valuable contribution to Scottish Church history and to the history of the time to which it relates. We may hereafter give a more comprehensive review of a book which we can now only commend. "Sons of the Croft," by P. May Hunter, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. This is a story, as the title indicates, of Scottish peasant life, which will amply repay perusal. "The Mystery of North Fortune," by George Douglas, from the same publisher, is a story in quite a different key, but is no less interesting than the "Sons of the Croft." "Golden Nails, and other Addresses to Children," by Rev. George Milligan, D.D., Minister of St. Matthew's Church, Edinburgh. Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier. A score of excellent short addresses, beautifully printed and most attractively bound. From the same house, so well and favourably known for the number and merit of its publications, we have also received the following books, which we must content ourselves with merely mentioning. "Swivelborough Manor," by Sarah Selina Hamer; "Sifted as Wheat," by Elizabeth Neal; "Bush and Town, a Homely Story of the Pacific Coast," by Catherine Kirby Peacock; "The Musgrove Ranch, a tale of Southern California," by T. M. Browne; "After Long Years, or Norman's Vow," by Ella Stone; "For Sake o' the Siller; a Fifeshire story of forty years ago," by Maggie Swan; "Ida Cameron," by Margaret Parker; "Prince Rupert's Namesake; or, After the Restoration," by Emily Weaver; and "The Willful Willoughbys, a Cathedral Story" and "Little Miss Vixen," both by Evelyn Everest-Green. Many of these stories have appeared as serials in the *Quiver* and other magazines. All are excellent of their kind, well printed, handsomely bound and abundantly illustrated.

THE UNITED STATES. An Outline of Political History, 1492-1871. New York: Macmillan & Co. Toronto: Copp, Clark Co. 1893.

No living English writer attracts so many various classes of readers as Mr. Goldwin Smith. His acknowledged mastery of literary style challenges the attention of everyone who has any pretensions to literary taste; and the announcement of a new work from his pen, especially if its subject matter is of a political nature, is received with eager and impatient curiosity. Some read him only to admire, some only to revile both the man and his opinions, but all are charmed with the grace and vigour and incisiveness of his work. We have frequently heard many people lament almost pathetically that one who writes so admirably should write so little of permanent value; but the fact is that a great many of his so-called ephemeral writings have been mere preliminary studies for works of enduring value as is abundantly shown in his "Canada and the Canadian Question" and in the excellent volume now before us. In these volumes his studies for a quarter of a century are gathered together and moulded into finished and permanent form. Of the latter work little need be said. Lengthy extracts from it have appeared in the daily press and it has been reviewed at length by all the leading periodicals of two continents. No one who wishes to learn the political history of our neighbours and cousins to the south of us can afford to neglect reading it in the brief, clear and fascinating pages of Mr. Smith's masterly book.

JOSIAH IN NEW YORK; OR, A COUPON FROM THE FRESH AIR FUND. By James Otis. Boston: A. I. Bradley & Company.

A timely story, well printed, neatly bound and embellished with rather striking illustrations.

With the December number the eighteenth volume of the *Presbyterian Record* is completed. It has run a long and useful course and it promises well for the church that its circulation continues to advance. It has now a circulation of 30,000 copies monthly, a fact very full of meaning for the usefulness of the *Record* and its acceptability in the families of the church. It is a live publication and well deserves the large support it gets. Many thousand families in our church do not yet get the *Record* and we hope its circulation will go on growing until it reaches every family, as it ought to do. The *Children's Record* is in its eighth volume and is always attractive. This month's number contains a likeness of two of our well-known and loved Trinidad missionaries—the Rev. John Morton, D.D., and Rev. J. K. Grant, D.D., who have both laboured for over twenty years in the foreign field.

The Way into Holiest is an exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, by the Rev. F. B. Meyer, B.A. The object of the author being, as he says, "to derive" those great spiritual lessons which are enshrined in the sublime words of the epistle, he does not spend time in discussing the authorship of the epistle or other disputed points. The style is easy and attractive and the treatment of the subject thoughtful, suggestive and spiritual. This book will bear out Mr. Moody's verdict, "Few books of recent years are better adapted to instruct and help Christians than those of this author." Fleming H. Revell Co., Toronto.