

and we shall have an amount to expend next session which will procure us some valuable and much wanted books.

(4) As the College Committee have resolved to found a Museum, because of the subserviency of objects of antiquity and natural history to the illustration of Scripture and natural theology, Students may act as Collectors to the Museum. Indian remains, and interesting mineralogical and geological specimens may be found in many parts of the Province.

## Original Communications.

### SUGGESTIONS RESPECTING HOME MISSIONS.

In the last number of the *Record* there was an article entitled "The Presbyterian Church of Canada," in which were certain remarks on the subject of the Home Mission, the College and Sustentation fund, with most of which we cordially agree; and there are a few additional observations in reference more especially to one of these subjects, that of Home Missions, which we should like through your periodical, if thought suitable, to communicate. This may be regarded as the most important of the three topics, inasmuch as all the means in operation for upholding a gospel ministry, as the education and support of it are subservient to the supply of a preached gospel. Some means still more energetic than hitherto should, we think, be adopted for increasing this supply. We cordially agree with the writer in regard to the necessity of having a Superintendent appointed; that he would require to be an individual distinguished both by zeal and wisdom. Every part of the Mission field, we conceive, should be minutely investigated and thoroughly known, so as to ascertain if each part of it be attended to, and receive that share of Missionary labour which its importance demands; and whether any part of it may not be overlooked. We discovered, in a late Missionary tour, various places we might name, some of which were entirely, and others almost entirely overlooked! This is a great evil, and to this neglect as much, perhaps, as to any other cause, may we ascribe the extinction of our church in various quarters, and its absorption by other sects. In how many places, where there are now, from this neglect, scarcely any traces of the Presbyterian church, might there be flourishing congregations, had a watchful superintendence been exercised, and that measure of supply which, even with our limited means, could have been afforded. Occasional visits, even from adjoining ministers, might have prevented their abandonment of these religious principles in which they had been instructed. It were well, therefore, that there were set on foot what may be styled a Mission of investigation throughout the whole of our destitute localities; and which might be effected by the Superintendent, if not personally, by bringing about the appointment of such a Mission in each Presbytery; and when places are found to have been overlooked, every effort should be made to remedy the evils that may have arisen from this neglect; and to awaken that interest in religion and the principles of our church which may have become extinct.

Another important object would be to bring the Missionary field, within the bounds of each Presbytery, into districts, to be supplied, each of them, by a Missionary, or, where this was impracticable, by one or more catechists, or by adjoining ministers. It would be of great importance that whatever supply were offered should be regular. A desire for this has repeatedly been expressed to us in Missionary stations. Through the division of these into districts, such a regular supply might, at least to a great extent, be afforded. Such a provision for regular supply would tend to prevent those disarrangements which not unfrequently happen, and have a hurtful effect, and those conflicting appointments which sometimes take place from want of system in the arrangements made. It would render unnecessary those long journeys by the Missionary from one station to another, which are often

both expensive and laborious, and tend to prevent these lengthened interruptions of supply, which have often a discouraging, sometimes an irritating effect on congregations; this system would have the effect also of increasing the attendance, as the seasons of Divine Service would be much better and more generally known than when the supply is irregular. Such a minute inspection of the mission field—such systematic and energetic efforts for a full supply of every part of it as our amplest resources afford, seem imperatively called for. The interests of our church have long suffered for the want of it. We are persuaded that the adoption of such a vigorous and effective plan of operations, would mightily contribute to its prosperity and extension. It is pleasing to witness the increased activity of the church in regard to Missionary operations; and the manifestation of this spirit encourages us to hope for, and endeavour to excite to increased zeal and exertion in this important cause. The church is making progress in it, but still greater energy is necessary; and the adoption of still more enlightened and efficient means for rendering her zeal effectual.

Doubtless there will be some difficulty, if not in dividing the bounds of each Presbytery into districts, at least in supplying each of them with frequent and regular Divine services; more may be done for this, however, than may at first sight appear practicable. The institution for raising up a gospel ministry among ourselves will be annually sending forth new labourers into the vineyard; while the late act of Synod, requiring each Missionary to labour a year before settling, will secure each of them for the mission field for that period. Stations for which Missionaries cannot be provided, may enjoy the labours of catechists. Were the church, generally, led to adopt the plan which some Presbyteries have acted upon, (whether they continue to do so or not we cannot say) of directing a Sabbath, and several week days, periodically, to certain destitute localities, a great amount of additional labour would thus be secured. We have found, we admit, considerable reluctance in some of the brethren to submit to this partition of their labours, betwixt their own congregations and destitute localities; but so convinced are we of the necessity of this sacrifice, at least in present circumstances, and its beneficial tendency, that we have little doubt that the church will be led—as a general measure—to adopt it; and the sooner we are convinced the better. Not only would much destitution be thus supplied, but these ministerial visits would have the most happy effect in encouraging the people to strengthen the cause amongst them—in preventing a diminution of our adherents, and checking in the bud other nascent evils.

Nor are we aware of any valid objections to this partial allotment to the missionary field of ministerial labour. Any reluctance on the part of congregations to be deprived, for an occasional Sabbath, of the services of their minister, would be doubtless overcome—were such a share of their labours, for the supply of a vast destitution, demanded by the church, and a strong representation made of the necessity of the sacrifice, and the benefits flowing from its being universal; and though, certainly, the spiritual interests of a minister's own congregation have the first claim on his sympathy and exertions, the religious concerns of destitute congregations, in his immediate neighbourhood, have a claim upon both, we are persuaded, not much inferior—less, to be sure, in respect of relationship—but more in respect of destitution; and, therefore, he is not only justifiable in affording to these places a share of his labours, but is blameable, we apprehend, if he refuse it.

In addition to the supply thus afforded by catechists, preachers, and settled ministers, there may be expected, from time to time, as hitherto, a reinforcement of labourers from the parent church—to which, especially since the disruption, we are under the strongest obligations; and we have reason to believe that it would contribute to increase our supply of labourers from home, were there an increase of funds. From the want of any regular plan or system of operations, in reference to missionary contributions, Presbyteries have often very

inadequate resources for upholding Missions within their bounds, and are sometimes scarcely able to make good their obligations. This need never be the case were there any systematic effort made to keep congregations in mind of their duty in respect to contributions, and any regularity in settled charges to collect yearly for the fund. From these two sources combined, there might always be ample funds; and one important end which would be served by the appointment of a Superintendent of Missions, would be that a vast accession to the funds would be realized with the greatest facility. But not only by additional exertions, but also by additional methods might resources, for upholding Missions, be increased. We conceive that the adoption of that plan of the Missionary meetings, which is so successful among our brethren of the Methodist church, might, with true advantage, be adopted by us. By means of these, we understand, on good authority, the Methodist church raises about £4000 annually; and did we realize only half the sum, it would impart, we believe, a very considerable impetus to our missionary operations. Might not one or two brethren of each Presbytery, who might be thought most thoroughly to combine missionary zeal with adaptation for the platform, be appointed to visit the principal congregations within their bounds—whether pastoral charges or mission stations—for the purpose of holding meetings, and delivering addresses on the subject of Missions; and at the close, obtaining subscriptions, and appointing collectors to go round afterwards among the people for additional contributions? In this effort we would not be left to our own resources. We lately assisted our Methodist brethren on one or two of these occasions; and some of the most talented of the speakers expressed regret that they had not an opportunity of reciprocating the friendly co-operation they received from Free Church ministers at such meetings, and which they would be very happy to afford. We see no valid objection that can be made to the adoption of this plan, and it has much to recommend it. In addition to its advantages in awakening a missionary spirit, and raising funds, it would habituate our ministers to a department of public speaking, to which they are not so much accustomed, perhaps, as the ministers of some other denominations; and an improvement in which might render them more effective advocates of our cause both here and elsewhere. An abundance of funds would, we think, greatly facilitate our obtaining a supply of labourers from the parent church, especially upon a plan often suggested, but not much, if at all, acted upon,—of preachers coming out for a limited time, to return, if they thought fit, after its expiration—their expenses to and from Canada being defrayed. Had we so much resources in hand, as not only to guarantee support to such labourers while here, but to defray the expenses of their voyage, we might expect to obtain them more easily than when depending on the church at home both for men and resources.

And in speaking of the supply of labourers, we would advert, for a few moments, to a sentiment which we have repeatedly heard expressed by some of the brethren, but in which we cannot at all concur—namely, that the only source of supply to which we must look, is the institution for raising a gospel ministry amongst ourselves, and that it is vain to look for any supply from home. We must say, that much as we respect some, from whom we have heard this sentiment, we cannot but differ from it *in toto*. While we are ready to admit that our college is the principal, we cannot consent to its being regarded as the only channel through which we should expect a supply of labourers. We have yet too much religious destitution, and the means of grace are too inadequate, to justify the church at home in abandoning us for some time yet to our own resources; and the language which would vindicate such a desertion of us, or dispose us to acquiesce in it, we cannot but regard as much to be deprecated. We sincerely hope such language will be discontinued; and that, on the contrary, every effort will be made to obtain from the parent church, from time to time, a supply of labourers for the harvest. We are aware that her