

THE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE'S "PLAN OF STUDY."

Conducted by Rev. Alfred Gandier, Convener.

The special "Topic Card" for the Presbyterian C. E. Societies embraces the "Uniform" Topics, the Monthly Topics of the Plan of Study, and the Questions on the Shorter Catechism for each meeting throughout the year. Price \$1.00 per 100. "Booklet" containing the same matter, and also Daily Readings for the whole year, price \$1.50 per 100.

For Balance of Year.—Topic Cards, 50c per hundred; Booklets, 75c per hundred.

Orders and remittances to be sent to

REV. R. D. FRASER,

Confederation Life, Toronto.

Monthly Topics For 1899.

October—What our College Students do for Home Missions.

November—Our own Church; the Old Century and the New.

Topic for the week beginning November 12.

DR. DUFF AND INDIA MISSIONS.

By Mr. Robert Murray, Halifax, N. S.

About three-fourths of the inhabitants of the British Empire dwell in India. Missionaries carried the knowledge of Christ into various portions of that vast country long ago, but the true faith took slight hold on the people. Christianity was hardly visible when Carey bravely ventured on his work in the closing years of last century. Even to this day the Christian population of India does not exceed three millions. Our thoughts naturally turn to our own young and prosperous mission in Central India, happily but one of many missions sent from churches in Europe and America since Dr. Duff entered the field in 1829.

The man who has done most to bring the religious needs of India before the Presbyterian Churches throughout the world was Alexander Duff. He was but one of many eminent men who devoted themselves to the great task; but he was pre-eminent.

Duff was born April 25, 1806, at Moulin, Scotland. His parents were godly peasants who brought up their son in the fear of God. At the age of fifteen he was sent to the University of St. Andrew's, where he appeared "a tall, eagle-eyed, impulsive boy." When he entered college he received from his father the sum of twenty pounds. From that time he entirely maintained himself by winning prizes and bursaries.

At this time St. Andrew's enjoyed the presence of Dr. Chalmers, and young Duff at once felt his influence and power. He awakened intellectually and spiritually, and began to show that interest in missions which proved life-long.

In 1824 a "Students' Missionary Society" was formed, of which Duff was an active

member, and which aided in developing the missionary spirit in Scotland.

In 1829 Duff was licensed to preach the Gospel. His first sermon was preached in St. Giles's, Edinburgh, his text being, "For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

The motto of the Reformed Church of Scotland, adopted in 1560 was, "And the glad tidings of the Kingdom shall be preached through all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." The long, fierce struggle against prelacy, and for liberty, prevented Scotland from taking due part in making known the Gospel.

In 1815 the Church of Scotland sent Rev. James Bryce as chaplain to Calcutta. He organized a Scotch Church, but made no effort to convert Hindus. In 1824, at the suggestion of an enlightened Brahman, Rammohun Roy, he memorialized the General Assembly to begin missionary and educational work in India. It was agreed to send to India one ordained minister and two teachers.

In 1827 the position was offered to Duff, but modesty led him to decline the offer. His college mate, John Urquhart, was preparing to go, but he was suddenly cut off by death. In 1829 Duff accepted the appointment. On October 14, he and his wife sailed from London for India. Violent storms were encountered, and finally a hurricane drove the ship on a desert isle near Cape Town, South Africa. All escaped with their lives, but Duff lost his large and valuable library and, in fact, all his possessions.

Many weeks passed before another ship for Calcutta called at the Cape. In March the arrival of another ship enabled him to set out again for India. It was late in May when they reached the mouth of the Ganges. When seemingly safe, the monsoon burst upon them, and after great peril the ship was flung upon the shore of an island a total wreck. All escaped and found shelter in a deserted temple. Boats arrived next day to bear them to Calcutta.

Of all the equipment with which Duff left Scotland nothing remained to him when he landed in India but a Bible and a psalm-book which had drifted ashore from the wreckage near Cape Town.

In July 1830, Duff, in opposition to the views of other missionaries (except Carey) commenced teaching in Calcutta. He was greatly aided by Rammohun Roy, who handed over to him the building and the pupils of his own institution, and became himself a pupil. This cultured Brahman continued Duff's friend and helper till his death in 1833. The college became a decided success, though long watched and denounced by the Orthodox Hindu party. Converts to Christianity were won in hopeful numbers.