

is generally said. He is not to expect that all the overtures should come from others. But after all allowance is made for this, it remains to be acknowledged that in too many instances they are left very much to themselves, and it is for the members of our churches to say whether or not they have in this respect been doing their duty to the many young "strangers within their gates." In Toronto alone what a large number of young people there are of both sexes away from home! It surely ought to be possible for a very large number of these to secure introductions to residents at whose houses they might be more or less frequent visitors, and from whom they might receive both kindness and encouragement. We are quite aware that this is done in many cases, but is it to such an extent as it ought to be, and easily might? We fear not. Far be it from us to say that the people of Toronto are abnormally cold and exclusive, though we have often heard such a character given them. But may it not be asked with all respect and earnestness, if all is done which ought to be attempted for the welfare of the multitudes of youth who come to this and other cities for educational or business purposes? And are the ministers and parents of these young people sufficiently careful in securing introductions for them in the places of their sojourn? We fear not. Are those who remain at home always sufficiently anxious to keep up the home life by regular correspondence? by a strongly manifested interest in all that concerns the wayfarers? by little presents? by the encouragement of home visits, etc.? We scarcely think they are. In these sentences we merely hint at what forms the subject of much and anxious thought in many more or less lonely homes and hearts. If every Christian home were opened to a few of those whose only homes are cheerless and not very comfortable boarding houses, it is difficult to calculate the amount of good which might be effected. Not a few, we cheerfully acknowledge, are employing this means of usefulness to good purpose. Would it be reckoned too much for us to ask every one of our readers gravely to ponder whether he or she may be of the number who are trying to do their duty in this respect? The loneliness and the temptations of a great city are simply terrible. Let all take care, while they may be denouncing vice and scornfully condemning dissipated young men, that they have no reason in self-condemnation to add, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother in that we saw the anguish of his soul and hearkened not unto him."

CHURCH ATTENDANCE.

THE "Christian Monthly" for November, in closing an article upon the Church Congress held in Newcastle, England, in October last, calls attention to the fact that according to a census of worshippers in that city and Gateshead, taken on a certain Sabbath recently, there has been apparently a "startling" falling off in attendance at the churches. Since 1851—that is, in thirty years—the population of Newcastle had grown from 87,784 to 149,549, while the church attendance had decreased by 761. In Gateshead, also, the population had increased 154 per cent., but the gain in all the churches was only 462 persons. The ratio of attendance in the two places was in 1851 seventeen per cent., and in 1881 twelve and two fifths per cent. These are strange statements. We naturally ask, is this falling off general? In Liverpool, again, a census taken in 1881 gave in 218 places of worship an attendance of 63,576, as against 101,982 in 154 places of worship in 1853, when the population was 150,000 less than at present. Here we have a falling off of church attendance in twenty eight years of over 38,000, with an increase of population of 150,000, and of sitting accommodation in the churches of 36,849. These figures, if they cannot be explained, are very significant.

When, in contrast with these alleged facts, we consider the admissions of Mr. Frothingham and others who are not particularly favourable to the churches, to the effect that when he was in Europe lately he found "Evangelical religion was stronger and the churches were better filled; there was more of the religious spirit abroad than twenty years ago;" also, the reports continually reaching us of progress and prosperity in all the churches, of the success of mission and philanthropic agencies among the poor and vicious in all the cities and towns of Great Britain; and further, the great success, six years ago, of the

Moou, Sankey movement, in which Newcastle had a prominent place, and the continued use of such Evangelistic efforts with, we are told by prominent ministers of all the churches, gratifying results, we feel that some explanation is required. Is it a fact that while the study of the Scriptures is becoming more general, Sabbath schools are increasing in number and efficiency, special services and missions are successful not only in attracting crowds but in securing the higher results of saving conversion, church edifices are increasing in number and becoming more costly, comfortable and attractive, nevertheless a smaller proportion of the people are worshipping in the church buildings and connecting themselves with the church organizations? We confess to entertaining a doubt as to this being a fact; but if it is, then we must accept the other alternative, that the modern religious movement is largely outside the churches, and that a phase of Christianity is coming upon us which will affect in a very marked manner the churches of Christendom. What are the facts in Canada in reference to the above statements?

THE LATE COLLEGE FRACAS.

IN addition to the letter from Dr. Reid which we give in another column, we have received two communications from students of Knox and University Colleges which we don't feel it necessary to publish. We are as concerned as our correspondents possibly can be for the fair fame and continued prosperity of University College, and willingly allow all that can justly be drawn in favour of the students from Dr. Wilson's letter, which we had not seen when we wrote in the terms complained of. We have no doubt the worthy President is in the highest degree anxious to raise the whole moral tone of the College generally, and of the boarding-house particularly, and we give him full credit for his self-denying efforts in the matter, and for the amount of success in it which he has already achieved. We have also not the slightest doubt about the Doctor being fully persuaded that the whole affair in question was a very harmless one, and that the less that is said about it the better. At the same time, we decline to take in full the roseate estimate which the President and our correspondents have adopted, and reiterate our conviction that the proceeding, though perhaps not so bad as at first represented, was exceedingly discreditable to all concerned, more especially when taken in connection with many not very much less questionable proceedings for which the boarding-house in University College has for years past been specially notorious. Indeed, the defence of the whole matter which has carried most weight with us has been couched both by past and present students in some such terms as the following: "Why come down with such severity on lads who have been merely following in the footsteps of those who have gone before, and have been guilty of little if anything worse than what has been enacted again and again without rebuke or even almost without remark?" It has been further urged in defence that, as a matter which nobody at all acquainted with the actual facts would ever think of denying, the boarding-house has been long under the loosest possible management, if indeed it could be said to be under any management whatever, and notwithstanding Dr. Wilson's well-meant and strenuous endeavours, the state of things in that establishment is at this moment very far from being anything like what the best friends of the College could desire. Indeed, so much is this the case, that some of the best and most enlightened friends of the University are exceedingly anxious to see the boarding house abolished altogether. It is not needed, for we believe we are correct in saying that not much more than a tenth part of the students either could or would avail themselves of its accommodation. It is a heavy bill of expense with no corresponding benefits, but with some things which have to be characterized by a very different name. To say that those who board in private houses are either less comfortable, less studious, or less moral and upright, than "residents," would be simply absurd. Indeed, we could use a stronger term, and yet not be too strong. What nine-tenths of the students can do, and with great advantage every way, the other tenth might also easily and usefully accomplish. Indeed, we cannot think of one good end which the boarding-house serves, while it has been injurious both to individuals and to the general cordiality and pleasant relations

which ought to subsist among the whole body of the students. It has been the occasion of cliques and cabals, of many very unworthy proceedings, much jealousy, and not a little which is just as well left unspecified. No man in his senses, and competently acquainted with the facts of the case, would ever think of denying all this, and therefore we feel that there is force in the plea which, as we have said, has been urged on our attention, that the system ought to be condemned far more than the individuals concerned in this latest escapade. Abolish the boarding-house, it is argued, and instead of the moral control over the students becoming less, it would be greatly increased. At any rate, of this we are certain, that by far the larger number of rather discreditable incidents in the history of University College have been originated and carried through by those who in theory have been most under the eye and most amenable to the control of the College authorities.

We are rejoiced to believe that the late fracas was not so bad as it was at first represented, but it is worse than absurd to affirm that for a good while past matters have been going on in every respect as the best friends of our Provincial College could possibly have desired; and it is just as well that this fact should be known and pondered. It is all very easy to repeat the old saw about old heads not being easily put upon young shoulders, and about the grand old use and wont of riots and disarray, "town and gown" squabbles, wine parties and general good fellowship, being parts of the jolly old University life which has been handed down almost from time immemorial, and without which all would be stale, flat, and unprofitable. But in the meantime all this has implied in cases beyond number the irretrievable wreckage of young lives, the bitter disappointment of fond hopes, and the manufacture, not of that grand indescribable something called "gentleman," but of something very much the reverse, as the sad experience of many both in the past and present, both in Ontario and elsewhere, can very unmistakably testify. What we have said has been with deep regret. If henceforth we shall never have occasion to speak of any of our Ontario institutions of learning except in terms of the strongest and most unfeigned congratulation and praise, none will rejoice more than we shall. In the meantime, for young men who ought to know better, loftily to dismiss the whole alleged grounds of anxiety and even alarm "as a pack of lies" is not so encouraging and satisfactory as could be desired.

We repeat in closing what we said on first taking notice of a state of things which has long been talked much of in private, that we have spoken of the matter at all with the greatest possible reluctance, and we add that we shall be rejoiced above measure if we never have to speak of it again, except as that which has entirely and forever passed away.

AN addition is being built in rear of the Presbyterian church, Wallaceburg, which, when completed, will add very much to the convenience and attractiveness thereof. It is intended that the choir shall occupy a position in rear of the pulpit instead of being crowded up into a corner as heretofore. A vestry is also being built for the convenience of the pastor.

A FEW days ago one of the members of the Presbyterian Church at Blyth called on the pastor, Rev. A. McLean, and handed him \$100, requesting him to have it appropriated as follows. To Dr. McKay's Mission, \$50, to the general Foreign Mission Fund, \$50. "The history of this case," writes Mr. McLean, "is worth relating, as it may be a practical sermon to many in the Presbyterian Church. It is this: The donor having a number of years ago resolved to abstain from the use of tobacco, and to devote the amount spent yearly to the cause of missions, comes now forward to carry out this part of his resolution. As the sum saved was not sent away each year, but allowed to accumulate, it is now being sent off in great part from the time when the resolution was first acted on. Very likely there is more to follow. Why does not our Church take a firmer stand against this sinful waste, this health-impairing, man-destroying custom? If all our members of the Presbyterian Church who are in the habit of using "the weed" would follow the example of my excellent friend above referred to, would the appeals for missionaries from the North-West and from the foreign field be made in vain, as they now to a considerable extent are, because of the lack of funds?"