

and to propose to the societies such means to this end as the committee may find feasible."

This recommendation is altogether in the right direction, and the committee, through its energetic convener, Rev. R. D. Fraser, is now asking the attention of the Church to it. The means already at hand are to be used for this purpose, and no new or additional organization is to be set on foot. In this the committee has acted wisely.

The plan, in detail, provides for the recitation and brief consideration of a question of the Shorter Catechism at each meeting—say five minutes in all. This for doctrine. A meeting a month was asked for the consideration of the polity, history, and work of the Church, and the topics for 1897 embrace a general survey, of the great missionary, educational, and benevolent schemes of the Church, a meeting to each, and such further topics as "Why We Are Presbyterians," "Foundation Work—John Knox and His Times," "The Westminster Assembly," "How the Business of the Church is Done—Her Constitution and Courts," "The Story of the Unions and the Present Strength of the Church," "What Our Young People May Do for the Church."

As we would expect, the plan here outlined has so far been well received by the Church. As time goes on improvements can be made as the need for them is discovered. The season is now on us for a long pull of steady, hard work, and if our young people will all earnestly enter into this proposed plan, it will be fraught with much benefit to themselves, it will establish them in the great scriptural doctrines, and in the glorious history with which our Church is identified, and add the lustre of increased usefulness to all efforts after Christian Endeavor, both in our own Church and in the world-wide organization which is the bond uniting together all Christian Endeavor Societies.

### WINTER HOME MISSION WORK.

THE approach of winter brings much anxiety to the superintendents of our Home Missions and Presbyterian Home Mission Conveners respecting the supply for the season with missionaries and Church ordinances of our widely scattered and needy Home Mission fields. Some time ago a circular referring to our winter supply and demands was issued by Rev. Dr. Warden containing the following statement:

"There is likely to be a larger number of missionaries required for the Home Mission field during the approaching winter, than for several years past. Especially is this the case with reference to the North-west. In a letter just received from Rev. Dr. Robertson, he says: 'So far as I can make out now every mission field in the Presbytery of Victoria will be vacant; four will be vacant in the Westminster Presbytery; eleven in Kamloops; ten in Edmonton and Calgary; eleven in Regina; seven in Minnedosa; five in Melita, seven in Brandon; seven in Portage la Prairie; five in Rock Lake; five in Superior. Only about twenty men will be available for this district from Manitoba College. If fifty or sixty missions are to be left vacant, or even the half of that number, it would look as if we might go out of the Home Mission business.' In view of such a state of matters, it is earnestly hoped that many men, both ordained and unordained, will come to the help of the Church, and offer their services for the ensuing winter."

The Executive of the Home Mission Committee met here last week and transacted a large amount of business. The report shows that to the various Presbyteries there were allotted for services rendered during the last six months the total amount of \$28,776. Changes in grants were made, new applications considered and appointments settled upon to mission fields for the winter to the number of one hundred and six. The claims of the Synods of Manitoba and the North-west, and of British Columbia were also attended to, the Rev. Dr. Robertson being on hand to give information, as also Rev. Allan Findlay, to report for his field, which we publish in full and which will be read with interest by all who have our Home Mission work on their heart. We urgently and most heartily commend it to the attention of all our readers. For the information and guidance of students and others who may contemplate making application for appointment in the spring as missionaries, we quote the following from the report of the proceedings of the committee:

"It was resolved that applications at the spring meeting of the committee for appointments from university students, who only offer their services for the summer, will not be considered until all theological and other students, who agree to remain for at least one year in the mission field, have received appointments."

"It was further agreed that hereafter no student or other missionary appointed to fields in the Synods of Manitoba and the North-west, and of British Columbia, will have his return expenses paid from the funds of this committee unless he labor in the field continuously for at least ten months. Further, it was agreed that only those students who offer their services for a term of at least six months, will hereafter be eligible for appointments. The following were empowered to make any necessary appointments to fields prior to the March meeting of the committee:—Drs. Cochrane, Robertson and Warden. Blank forms of application for work can be obtained by sending a post-card to Rev. Dr. Warden, Toronto, and all applications will be laid before the committee."

Although the committee have put forth strenuous efforts to supply the mission fields in the

western part of the Dominion, it would appear that there are still fifteen missions unprovided for. Such congregations as Morris, Plympton, Balmoral, Oak Lake, Shanks, Chater, Alexander, Melita, Deloraine, etc., are also vacant and more are likely to be in the same list soon. When there are so many ministers, missionaries and licentiates in Ontario who find it difficult to get settled, why should not some of them go west? During the past five years about twenty-three missions in that part of the Church have become congregations and many more would follow suit if they could find suitable pastors. Would it not be preferable to accept an appointment to a weak but growing mission in the west rather than a call to a feeble and decaying congregation in the east? A policy that would man the frontier and relieve the congestion in Ontario would be a rare boon. We understand that only with the greatest difficulty could a man be found for Rossland, for example, last spring; all graduates seemed to fight shy of it. Where could a strong man find a better field for work? Let this reproach of vacant fields in the west and idle men in the east be removed if possible.

In view of statements such as the above, and those in the report of Rev. Mr. Findlay, and of others already made in our columns, no one who wishes to know about our Home Mission fields, and the need of labourers, can plead lack of information. An aspect of this part of our work which is most serious and makes a loud call for liberality upon our Church, and which it is to be hoped will be heeded, is the failure to so large an extent of work in the lumbering regions where our Church is carrying on her missions. The ability of the people in all these districts to give as they have done, where it is not entirely taken away, is very greatly crippled. The means in the more favored parts of the Church to meet this increased demand made upon them, and every feeling of Christian sympathy for our brethren thus impoverished, the call of duty, and love to the Master come to these more favored ones to arise and meet this increased present, but in all probability only temporary need.

### MINISTERS' WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND.

WE have already published an appeal to the Church on behalf of this fund from the committee charged with administering it. The collection to be made for it in those congregations which support it in this way is to be taken up next Sabbath. We would remind pastors and Sessions of this fact. This is one of the schemes that surely ought to appeal most strongly to the sympathy, as well as liberality of our Christian people. It is the one designed to provide a maintenance for the widows and orphans of deceased ministers of the Church, and we confess to a feeling of surprise and pain to learn that a large number of congregations last year sent no contribution whatever towards this fund. The result was that the income fell short of the expenditure by \$3,600. As the Committee are not allowed to draw upon capital for the payment of the annuities, it will be necessary to reduce these, already small, unless the amount received this year shall be some \$5,000 in excess of that of last year. Owing to depreciation in the value of property upon which investments were made in former years, and owing to the great decrease in the rate of interest, the income from this source is very considerably smaller than formerly. On the other hand, the number of annuitants has greatly increased. We are well aware that the continued depression throughout the country affects the ability of many of our people to contribute large sums, but surely there ought to be no difficulty whatever in obtaining the comparatively small amount required for the maintenance of this scheme. This matter rests very largely with ministers and sessions, and we earnestly trust that no session or minister will deprive their people of at least an opportunity to contribute something in its support, but that the claims of the scheme will be presented from every pulpit in the denomination, and a collection taken. As the annuities require to be paid upon the 1st November, it is hoped that the collection will not only be taken next Sabbath, but that the amount of it will be forwarded to the Rev. Dr. Warden, before the end of the week.

Ministers are also reminded that their personal rates are payable in advance on the 1st November each year.

## Books and Magazines.

THE TALE OF BALEN. By Charles Algernon Swinburne. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

Mr. Swinburne stands so undoubtedly high in the ranks of living British poets that a new work by him is eagerly read; but his real status among our great poets of the last half of the nineteenth century is still undetermined, and will probably so remain until his works are subjected to the unprejudiced criticism of a later day. Like Tennyson in his idyl of "Ballad and Balan," Swinburne finds his theme in Mallory's Arthurian legends; and a comparison of the treatment of the same story by the two poets is naturally suggested, but is beyond the scope of this notice. Suffice it to say that while Tennyson, as is usual with him, merely finds a subject which he develops in his own way, Swinburne follows Mallory's story quite closely; and while Tennyson uses blank verse as in his other idyls, Swinburne uses the ballad stanza of Tennyson's "Lady of Shallott"—a stanza that is apt to become wearisome in so long a poem as "The Tale of Balen," if its fitness for such a theme may not be questioned on æsthetic grounds. Mr. Swinburne is an acknowledged master of all English poetical measures; and the way he overcomes the difficulties of some of them, in finding or making rhymes and rounding up stanzas is simply amazing. He has a prodigality of language that is quite unexampled among modern English poets, and he is sometimes so carried away by "the exuberance of his own verbosity" that his meaning is not always quite clear. To say that what is not clearly intelligible has no meaning would be unfair; but when the meaning cannot be readily apprehended it seems to us the form of expression must be faulty. We might quote several passages from this poem in which this vagueness of meaning is apparent, but it pleases us better to quote a stanza in which the poet's power of description and mastery of rhythm are distinctly noticeable. Our Canadian winter is coming on apace as we are warned by the changing leaves and falling temperature; and this is how the poet slugs off, let us say, a Northumbrian winter:

In winter when the year burns low  
As fire wherein no firebrands glow,  
And winds dishevel as they blow  
The lovely stormy wings of snow,  
The hearts of northern men burn bright  
With joy that mocks the joy of spring  
To hear all heaven's keen clarions ring  
Music that bids the spirit sing  
And day give thanks for night.

The publishers have produced the book in irreproachable form—clear type, thick paper, wide margins, uncut edges, and strong artistic covers.

The October *Cosmopolitan* contains a great many exquisitely executed illustrations which are in themselves a source of pleasure and instruction, to which the first articles, "A Summer Tour in the Scottish Highlands," "The Story of a Child Trainer," "The Perils and Wonders of a True Desert" very well lend themselves. Of the same kind are "The Modern Woman Out of Doors" and "Some Examples of Recent Art." "A Modern Fairy Tale" is the first part of a tale of modern business life by Theron C. Crawford. "The History of our Cooks," is another of the longer stories by Frances Courtenay Baylor. In the World of Art and Letters, and the Progress of Science there are the usual brief notes on a variety of timely subjects. [The *Cosmopolitan*, Irvington, New York, U.S.]

"All of Grace," an earnest word with those who are seeking salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. By C. H. Spurgeon. Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company. Every one who knows Spurgeon's writings knows what he may expect to find in a book from him with this title. No man has ever surpassed Mr. Spurgeon in the felicity and force with which he presents the saving truths of the Word of God, and here one of the central truths about salvation will be found fully set forth in the writer's own clear, forcible and instructive way. "It is God that Justifieth"; "Concerning Deliverance from Sinning"; "By Grace Through Faith"; "How May Faith be Illustrated"; "Alas! I Can Do Nothing"; "How Repentance is Given"; "Kept by the Power of God" are the titles of some of the chapters of this helpful little book. Price 50 cts.

In the October number of *Godey's Magazine* there appears a most interesting article on caricaturing and caricaturists, "The Present Campaign in Cartoon." This of course refers to the Presidential contest in the adjacent Union, and, together with an exposition of the principles of the work in question and some account of the achievements of the various workers, presents samples of a number of the best instances of pictorial badinage, which have so far appeared in the different metropolitan dailies. Although the writer of this article styles Mr. C. G. Bush, of the New York *Herald*, "the dean of newspaper caricature," we are inclined to appreciate most the productions of Mr. Homer C. Davenport, of the New York *Journal*. His cartoons, aside from being well-executed technically, are irresistibly droll. [The *Godey* Company, 52 Lafayette Place, New York.]

The *Methodist Magazine and Review* for October presents an interesting bill of fare. It leads off with an article on Australia, the "Greater Britain of the South Seas." Other interesting articles are, "In Search of His Grave," giving an account of the search for the true site of Calvary and the tomb of Christ, by Bishop Vincent; "Memories of the Bay of Naples," "James Russell Lowell and the Bigelow Papers," "John Nelson, the Yorkshire Mason," "Catherine of Siena," "An Inspiring Chapter in Methodist History," "True Emphasis in Religion," "The Far Distances of Our Universe," "The Mats of the Ancient Ethiopic Church." In the closing part we find an able bit of original research by W. M. Paton, of Leiden, Holland. A review of Swinburne's new poem; "Modern Apologetics," by Chancellor Burnash; notices of Lord Russell, Li Hung Chang, and Nansen, with portraits and map of Nansen's route; and Recent Science, with cut of Bazin's new rolling steamer, etc., make up a number of special interest. [William Briggs, Publisher, Toronto.]