

FIRST REPORT

OF THE

Ladies' Domestic Mission.

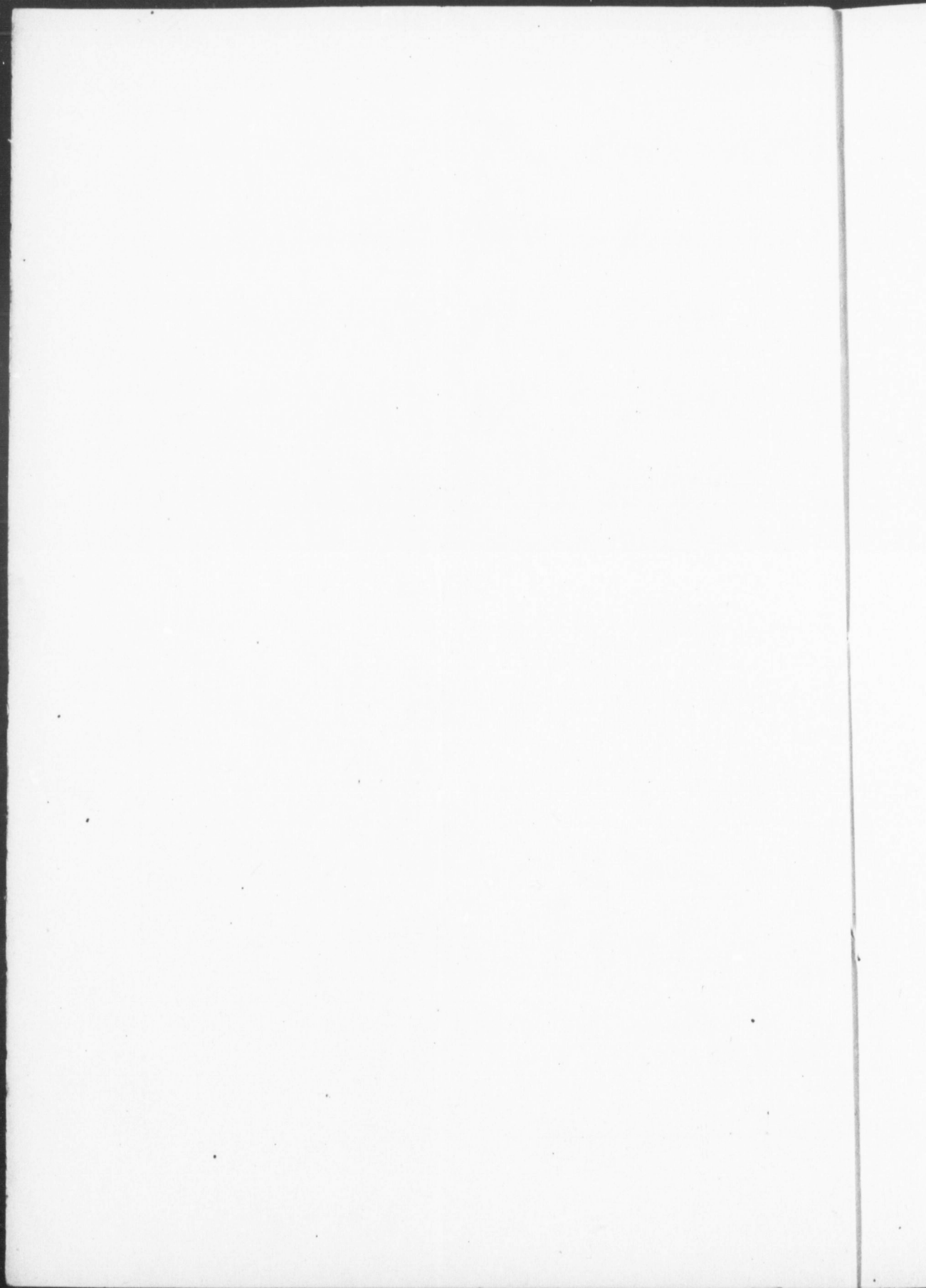
BELLEVILLE, ONTARIO.

APRIL, 1871.



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PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF THE "HASTINGS CHRONICLE."
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BELLEVILLE LADIES' DOMESTIC MISSION.

PRESIDENT:
Mrs. HANWELL.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:
Mrs. B. FLINT, Mrs. DAVY.

COMMITTEE:

Mrs. McLEARN,	Mrs. GRIER,
“ HOLTON,	“ J. H. HOLDEN,
“ EVANS,	“ McANNANY,
Miss MARY HOLDEN,	“ J. J. B. FLINT,
“ HUTTON,	“ J. C. HOLDEN,
“ PERRY,	Miss GRIER,
“ MEUDELL,	“ ALPORT,
“ MARTHA HOLDEN,	“ HANWELL,

With power to add to their number.

SECRETARY:
Miss WALLBRIDGE.

TREASURER:
Miss RITCHIE.

LADY SUPERINTENDENT:
Miss WALLBRIDGE.

BIBLE WOMAN:
Miss McCUNN.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Belleville Bible Woman's and Domestic Mission.

THERE is probably no period more anxiously anticipated by the careful husbandman, than the first harvest; and if it is new ground that has been taken in, new soil cultivated for the first time, and if perchance age and experience have shaken wise heads and looked grave upon the undertaking, the Farmer is doubly anxious to prove that his boldness was not rashness, or his enterprise without solid foundation. How carefully he repeats his calculation, Will the outlay be repaid? Will the result be an equivalent for the labour? Will the success overbalance his anxiety and cares? Will the in-gathered harvest prove he has judged well and wisely, or lay him open to the imputation of having undertaken a task too heavy, and wearied himself in a fruitless effort?

It is with a kindred feeling and some such questionings, that the Committee of this Association look forward to the close of their first year; and it lies with those who will carefully peruse the following pages, to give the verdict whether or not the work has been according to the mind of the Lord, and whether or not His presence has gone up with it as surely through the cloud, as in the bright shining of the light. Before judging of a result, we must be sure of the aim in view; before estimating success, we must know the wants to be supplied, and the difficulties to be overcome.

The question of the object to be attained is a most important one, lying as it does at the very root of the matter. The answer is a very simple one: "To bring the Gospel to every creature." It is frequently objected, that it is the duty of Clergymen to preach and teach. Undoubtedly it is their high privilege to be called to carry on the Ministry begun by Jesus of Nazareth; but it is not solely and only THEIR work to lead sinners to a Saviour; the first act of a believing disciple when Christ was on earth, was to bring a brother or a friend to the newly found Messiah, saying "come and see." It was not only in the temple that Christ taught the people, or only in the synagogue, that he stood up to read; it was out of the little ship, thrust back from the land, that he spake such words "as never man spake." It was from the mountain-side his wondrous sermon was delivered; it was by the way-

side he cured the blind man ; by the pool where lay the wretched and neglected, he healed the bedridden ; and by the side of Jacob's well he spoke words of life-giving truth.

The aim of this Association is, like Jesus, to reach the ignorant, the poor, the sick, the depraved, just where they can be found. Of the wants to be supplied and difficulties to be overcome, the notices from the Bible-woman's report are a sufficient explanation.

Although it is but one year since the arrival of the Bible woman in Belleville and the active commencement of the work, a much longer period has elapsed since the desire arose in the hearts of many of the Committee that such an agency should be employed, and very wisely preparation was made, funds gathered, and the subject brought forward for discussion ; so that when the time came that an appointment could be made, many rough places were made smooth, the stone was rolled away, and an immediate entrance was found for the simple message borne by the first Bible-woman. Before entering upon her work, a few words must be said of one who was invited from Montreal to act as pioneer, and break up the fallow-ground. The Agent selected did full justice to the nice discrimination of the Society in Montreal, in responding to the request from Belleville ; her labors, which extended over a period of six weeks, were unceasing, and marked by a peculiar tact and ability to lay hold of circumstances as they occurred, and turn them to good account ; characterized by an aptness to teach, and a skilful because a prayerful and loving application of God's Word ; she bore to many the message of a reconciled God, and to not a few sick and dying beds brought with new strength and sweetness the promises and support of God's word. Many of these cheering visits were paid to, and valued by, a class quite above those requiring pecuniary aid, and was a triumphant reply to the oft-expressed doubt of the utility and acceptance of such visits.

Among the general poor her visits were with few exceptions gratefully welcomed, and the way was thus opened for the reception of a resident Bible-woman.

It had long been the earnest wish of Mrs. McCunn, while doing "what she could," amidst the busy occupations of daily life, to give herself wholly to the Lord ; and when, shortly after her arrival in this country, an opening was found in the Biblewoman work, she entered upon it in entire dependence upon God's grace and guidance, feeling well assured that this was a warfare she could not enter upon at her own charges. The work of a Bible-woman in a scattered country town differs in several respects from that prosecuted in the crowded capitals, where the working classes, and especially the very poor, are confined to particular localities,—where a block or two of tall buildings or a few narrow streets teeming with inhabitants, constitute the Biblewoman's

district. In a country town the dwellings are widely scattered over a large area, and the families to be visited are of many grades, from the respectable mechanic whose christian wife prizes the friendship and religious companionship of the Bible-woman as a source of help and comfort under the pressure of domestic cares, down to the very lowest dwelling of humanity, made wretched and empty by strong drink.

In order to husband strength, save time, and give order and regularity to the Mission work, the suggestion was made and carried out, to divide the Town into 12 or more districts, consisting on an average of about 20 families; a lady visitor was appointed for each, whose duty it is to exchange tracts and take charge of the temporal wants of the poor and sick. Nothing is more important than to preserve intact the spiritual character of the Bible-woman's work, and to prevent her being regarded as an almoner. Mrs. McCunn visits regularly through these districts, taking them in rotation two or three a week, leaving time for occasional visiting, specially in cases of sickness. This system brought between two and three hundred families under the care and influence of the Mission. Thus a great and wide door of usefulness has been opened, and instead of the difficulties that rose like grim giants in the minds of many, the only complaint heard has been a regret that the visits were not more frequent. During the month of February 1870, in which Mrs. McCunn entered upon her work, there is a record of 170 visits, with the note "visited many others."

For obvious reasons such records must be sacred, however deeply interesting their perusal might be. In these pages two words stand out in bold relief, continually occurring, "read and prayed" in such a family or household. And is not the assurance that the word of God has thus free course, and the incense of fervent humble prayer thus ascends from many an otherwise prayerless home, worth all the thought and toil of those who have given themselves to the promotion of this Association.

There are other two words that often stand close beside the other, "can't read." It is probably very little known how large a portion of the destitute are unable to read, but the fact is undeniable. Mothers' meetings and evening adult classes do much to remedy this evil, by giving instruction in the only way it can be received. The month of March records the first Mothers' meeting held at Mrs. McCunn's house on the Plains, inaugurated by a small tea-party. The Saturday afternoon Sewing school for girls was regularly attended,—also a prayer-meeting for a special blessing on the Mission work, held at the house of a blind woman.

Visiting Prisoners in the Gaol is included among the varied duties of the Bible woman, although this department also is regularly attended

to, by a Lady visitor. There are interesting notices of reading to the sick and dying. One poor woman with almost her dying breath, spoke of the simple visit paid as if it came from God. In the journal of April Mrs. McC. remarks the number visited each week as generally about the same (over 30 families). "I have found" she says, "five families without bibles; some of these are unable to read. I have been occupied in opening up another district besides my usual visiting."

The month of May adds a second Mothers' meeting in a different part of the town. This meeting, though not without its use and importance, was never numerous, and during the winter was merged in the one on the Plains. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, it is no unfit subject for true gladness to read such a record as: "saw — in church for the first time during her 17 years;" or to watch with trembling hope the return to the sanctuary of one long a deserter from its courts.

The reports of June, July and August are filled with valuable information, marking a steady progress in gaining the confidence and affection of the people. The visits too, are at times cheered by meeting with some of God's chosen ones, whose joyful experience of a present Saviour made the place seem "a little heaven upon earth."—There are thankful records, too, of other wanderers, long strangers to Gospel ordinances, "returning to their right minds." A hope is expressed of thoughtfulness taking the place of careless levity. Of one district it is said, "more people go to church in this district than formerly." There are many phases in this christian labour; the sneer and cavil have to be calmly met,—the despairing sinner to be lifted up to a new hope,—the distressed to be comforted, and the erring warned to flee from the wrath to come.

The report closes with these words: "Amongst the non-church-going, the afflicted, fallen, and broken-hearted, my visits are much valued. I get so many thanks, and am asked to come again; I feel often weighed down by the thought, 'what am I among so many?' There are many houses I ought to be oftener in, did time permit."

During the months of September and October, a new effort was made to assemble on a Sabbath afternoon at the mission-room some of those who stand greatly in need of Bible instruction, or are unable to read. This Bible class is still in its infancy, not numbering more than four or five, but it is the Lord's work on the Lord's day, and so may claim a special blessing.

The Bible-woman endeavours to induce the people to take advantage of any meetings in the neighbourhood, and speaks with particular interest of one held in different cottage homes. "I think," she remarks, "I have been a link between the people and the meetings." Allusion is made to several who are subscribing for Bibles, and in one

case at least, it is money rescued from the tavern: while in the daily care of the welfare of souls, glimpses of hope and light often break through the darkness, on the other hand disappointment not unfrequently succeeds to hope, and sin, for a time at least, re-claims its sway. Of one family long shut out from any christian influences, three have been admitted by baptism into a visible Church. Again, there is anxious watchfulness over those who profess to have found Christ, and are rejoicing in peace; as one expressed it, "she felt as if she was living in a new world." Among those most kindly cared for, are five or six blind people, to whom Mrs. M.'s visits are peculiarly welcome, and eagerly looked for.

The reports of the closing months of the year show a steady and laborious working in an ever widening field; a first acquaintance giving place to a warm interest, and an affectionate pressing of the truth home upon the heart when the confidence had already been gained,—while even the lowest and most degraded begin to realize that hope is not gone forever when there are those who care for them and watch for their souls.

Many conversations of solemn interest pass between the Bible-woman and those among whom she ministers, a confidence that must remain inviolate; but enough has been said to prove the importance of such an agency as this Association affords, and enough too, if we mistake not, to show that the prayer has been heard which besought God to send one wise to win souls, and to go out and in among the people with loving faithfulness; 30 visits per week, 1,560 in a year, with the one object in view, to tell the story of the herald angels:—"Unto you is born this day a Saviour," is no small instrumentality in itself. The co-operation and superintendence of the Ladies is very valuable, and has been well sustained since February.

Several at whose sick and dying bed Mrs. M. was often found, have passed into eternity; of some it could be said with full assurance "it is well"; of others, awakened to a sense of sin and danger at the eleventh hour, only a trembling hope could be entertained that, though at eventide, Jesus had yet found them and laid them on his shoulders, and brought them to his fold. In one case, that of an elderly woman, there was a great and material change, and for months her progress in knowledge and grace could be clearly traced; a stolid indifference, a deadly apathy gave way to an humble and anxious earnestness and longing after divine teaching; all her old carelessness was gone in the struggle to enter in at the straight gate. "It is no easy thing," she said one day, "to be a christian." It is believed she died in the faith, trusting, as she said, "God's arms would be around her." This person was one of the first visited, and earnest prayer was made that she might be a first-fruit of the harvest.

There is one thing yet, before closing this first Report. Besides the spiritual wants for which God's Word makes spiritual provision, there are material necessities to be met; and the more extensive and successful the work is, the more these temporal requirements grow. We read in the olden times of Jewish history, when money was required to repair the house of the Lord, the young king commanded a chest to be made and laid at the gate, "and all the princes and all the people rejoiced and cast into the chest; this they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance." We should like to see this example followed out, both in the spirit and in the letter.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF No. I. MOTHERS' MEETING.

THIS Meeting was commenced in March 1870, by Mrs. Renaud, and had for its object the awakening of an interest in spiritual things, in the hearts of those who might attend, and at the same time offer to them the advantages of a Clothing club. The meetings have been held almost uninterruptedly every Thursday afternoon, and although the attendance has not been as large as could have been wished, it has been sufficiently encouraging to induce those Ladies who have taken charge, to continue the meeting. The plan pursued has been to furnish material for clothing of various kinds, and those desirous of obtaining it become subscribers, and pay in small sums as they find it convenient. While the articles of clothing are being cut out and made, one of the ladies reads some interesting and instructive book, and the meeting is closed with a Bible lesson and prayer.

The number of persons who have taken advantage of the Clothing Club during the year is 21, and these have paid in at the meeting in small sums \$70,92½.

As it was necessary to have some funds to purchase material to commence operations with, and also to furnish linings &c. to be given with the dresses subscribed for, some of the committee kindly contributed about \$4, and \$8 was granted from the Domestic Mission funds.

When Mrs. Tannahill took charge of the Treasurer's book in May, a balance was handed to her of \$4,12cts, to which subscriptions have been added at various times during the year, from Mrs. Jas. Ponton, Mrs. Holton, Miss Wallbridge, Mrs. Northrup, and Mrs. Tannahill, amounting to \$8,50,—making in all \$12,62. Adding this sum to the amount paid in by the women, we have \$83,54½. The amount expended for material has been \$82,95; leaving a balance in hand of 59½ cts. The articles of clothing made up and sold during the year are:—26 dresses, 14 girls' do., 15 shirts, 20 chemises, 42 aprons, 26 sheets, 7 night-gowns, 7 pairs drawers, 2 linen jackets, 1 cloth do.

And there were received from the Mission School ready made: 2 shirts, 2 small frocks, 1 petticoat, 12 aprons, 3 shirts, 4 chemises, also sold at the meeting; the proceeds of which are included in the amount paid in by the women.

Mrs. Hanwell, Mrs. Baker, and Miss Ritchie, kindly sent parcels of clothing in December, partly new and partly second-hand, which

were sold at a cheap rate, and produced \$5,29½. This sum is balanced by the material at present on hand, consisting of wincey, flannel shirts, 4 aprons, factory cotton, white do., and a remnant of striped stuff.

The Ladies who have taken charge of the meetings during the year are: Mrs. Renaud, Mrs. J. J. B. Flint, Mrs. Hanwell, Mrs. Jas. Ponton, Mrs. Francis Wallbridge, Mrs. Tannahill.

February 6th, 1871.

M. K. TANNAHILL,
Secretary-Treasurer.

REPORT OF No. II. MOTHERS' MEETING.

This little meeting was organized last Spring by Mrs. Renaud.—Miss McAdie offered the use of a nice large room in her house, not far from the Railway Station, for which, and for the kindness with which she received all who came, we feel much indebted.

Mrs. Baker and Miss Ritchie, with the constant and valuable assistance of your Bible-woman, took charge of the meeting till the end of July,—when Miss Mary Meudell for some time, and Mrs. Esson, attended, along with Mrs. McLearn, till the middle of November, when the meeting was discontinued. The number who attended was never large, and latterly from various causes, such as distance, sickness, and two of the parties leaving Belleville, it was thought best to give it up for the winter. Those who came seemed to like the meetings, and it may be hoped that next season, when it is re-organized in that locality, more may be induced to avail themselves of it. At the commencement of the meeting, \$6,25 was granted from the Domestic Mission Fund, and some materials were sent from the First Mothers' Meeting. The receipts and expenditure are, as far as can be ascertained from the Ladies in charge, as follows:—

Paid in by the women,	\$11 47
Donation from Mrs. Baker, Miss Ritchie, Mr. Campbell and Mrs. Esson, \$3,35, in all	14 82
Expended on material,	10 75
Balance on hand,	\$ 4 07

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BELLEVILLE DOMESTIC
MISSION SCHOOL.

The "Domestic Mission School" was commenced in the summer of 1869, by Mrs. McAdam, the Bible woman from Montreal, who remained a short time only in Belleville; subsequently the School was carried on by a few of the Ladies who were members of the Domestic Mission Society.

The children assembled once a week, upon Saturday afternoon, so as to keep none from attending their regular daily school: moreover, as the district school of Samson Ward was not used on this day, it was placed at the disposal of the Ladies, thus materially helping to decrease the expenses,—the rooms being well adapted to the purpose for which they were required.

The regular method pursued for instructing the children, secured the most excellent results; all classes of society were cordially invited, even urged to attend,—the richer to sew for the benefit of the needy, and the poorer ones to learn to sew and knit,—it having been noticed by those Ladies in the habit of visiting the poor, that very few, comparatively speaking, could sew properly, consequently were incapable of conveying the necessary instruction to their little ones. This deplorable state of things the Ladies undertook to remedy as far as possible.

Before beginning their afternoon's work, which was cut out and prepared by Mrs. C. H. Elliot, the children, often sixty in number, had religious instruction imparted to them by Miss Wallbridge, under whose constant superintendence the school was conducted. It is to be deeply regretted that the School could not be carried on for want of more liberal support, it being sustained solely by the mouthly contributions of the teachers, with the exception of several donations in money and material, from ladies taking an interest in its success.

Many serviceable garments were made and distributed to the poor, some incompleated ones being still retained until the school be resumed.

MARY MEUDELL,

Secretary & Treasurer.

DOMESTIC MISSION IN ACCOUNT WITH TREASURER FOR THE
YEARS 1869 AND 1870.

RECEIPTS.				DISBURSEMENTS.			
1869.				1869.			
April	To amount Collected,	\$20	80	By Mrs. McAdam's Salary	\$51	10	
May	" " "	39	07	" Materials for Mother's Meet-			
June	" " "	30	91	ings - - - - -	14	25	
July	" " "	19	96	" Furniture for Mission Room	29	10	
Aug.	" " "	20	12½	" Material for Sewing School	2	50	
Sept.	" " "	14	10	" Miss McCunn, 2 ms. Salary	40	31	
Oct.	" " "	46	47½	" Heating and Cleaning Room	2	12½	
Nov.	" " "	22	05	" Printing 200 copies of letter,			
Dec.	" " "	18	50	" "The Bible-woman and Do-			
1870.				estic Mission" - - - - -	1	50	
Jan.	" " "	9	50	" Miss McCunn 10 ms. Salary	166	70	
Feb.	" " "	9	15	" Rent for Mission Room	12	00	
March	" " "	21	20	" Material for Mothers Meet-			
April	" " "	33	72	ings - - - - -	9	25½	
May	" " "	32	63½	" Tracts - - - - -	3	79	
June	" " "	29	20	" Miss McCunn's Salary -	10	67	
July	" " "		75	" Material for Mothers' Meet-			
Aug.	" " "	15	11	ings - - - - -	7	71	
Sept.	" " "	33	78½	" Material for Sewing School	5	75	
Oct.	" " "	1	00	" " " Mothers' Meet-			
Nov.	" " "	20	84½	ings - - - - -	5	00	
Dec.	" " "	6	10	" Discount on Silver - - -	3	84	
1871.				" Balance due Miss McCunn	6	00	
Jan.	" " "	7	45	" Material for Mother's Meet-			
Feb.	" " "	21	22½	ings - - - - -	16	00	
March	" " "	17	94	" Material for Mother's Meet-			
				ings No. 1 - - - - -	16	00	
				" Miss McCunn's Salary -	33	34	
				" Sundry Expenditure - -	30	00	
				" Balance on hand - - -	24	66	
			<u>\$491 60</u>				<u>\$491 60</u>

CAROLINE WALLBRIDGE,
Secretary.

A. RITCHIE,
Treasurer.

DOMESTIC MISSION SCHOOL SOCIETY IN ACCOUNT WITH
TREASURER.

RECEIPTS.				DISBURSEMENTS.			
1870.				1870.			
Feb. 7	To Cash	\$4	25	Feb. 8	By Material	\$6	04
" 12	" "	1	00	July 29	" "	3	93½
June 24	" "	2	37½				
" 24	" "		25				
July 5	" "	2	10				
			<u>\$9 97½</u>				<u>\$9 97½</u>

MARY MEUDELL, Sec. and Treas.