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Contributed.

THE REV. MICHAEL WILLIS, D.D., LL.D.

TWO names much associated in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada are those of Drs. Burns and Willis. Of the former an interesting sketch has already appeared in this journal.

Michael Willis was born at Greenock in the year 1798. His father, a man of high character and excellent endowments, was minister of the Original Burgher congregation in that town, and also professor of theology in the small, but respectable, communion to which he adhered. At an early age Mr. Willis entered the University of Glasgow, where his course was quite distinguished, especially in the Greek language. In 1821 he was ordained as minister of Renfield Street Church, Glasgow. On the death of his father, Mr. Willis, though a young man, became his successor as professor of theology. He seems, generally, to have taken his father's place as the most prominent minister of his Church, and under his leadership the Original Burghers united with

the Establishment in 1839. With all the ministers of his former connection he came out at the Disruption in 1843. In 1847 the Rev. Dr. Bayne, of Galt, was sent to Scotland to confer with the Colonial Committee of the Free Church regarding the appointment of a professor of divinity in Knox College, and the services of Dr. Willis, whose high qualifications were on all hands recognized, were happily secured. He entered upon his duties in the College at the commencement of the session 1847-8, and continued to discharge them till 1870, when, on the ground of years, he resigned his office and returned to Britain. After his retirement he lived mostly in London, but he made frequent visits to his native Scotland, as also excursions to the Continent of Europe—rendering valuable service to the cause of Christ in various evangelistic labors. He was also in the evening of his life, permitted to fulfil a long-cherished purpose of visiting Palestine. He last saw Canada in '71; for, by a graceful act, being appointed Moderator of the first General Assembly of our Church, he returned to our shores to open the Assembly held at Quebec in the year following his resignation. He died rather suddenly when on a visit to Scotland, in the end of 1879.

Dr. Willis was possessed of high talents and much force of character. His mind was remarkably vigorous, but it was also subtle and versatile as well, and he could express the finest distinctions with great facility and accuracy. He was an excellent scholar, and was, as we have seen, eminent for his knowledge of Greek. His classical attainments were kept up, and even extended, till his later years, of which we have proof in his "Collectanea," a book of Patristic extracts which he published for the use of his classes in Knox College.

As a theologian he tenaciously held the Calvinistic system in its integrity, and he defended its various doctrines with ability and zeal, though always with discrimination. His mind was polemical, though his views were far from narrow, and he did not fail in charity towards those who conscientiously differed from him. His speech in the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in the case of a Mr. Scott, who had adopted certain Morisonian tenets, was pronounced by Dr. Cunningham one of the ablest theological arguments to which he had ever listened. It need scarcely be said that in his chair his teaching was in strict harmony with the stand-

ards of the Presbyterian Church, whilst strong personal conviction gave it vitality and force. The doctrines of grace he magnified both in chair and pulpit, and he gave no uncertain sound on any part of the Reformed faith. He had no desire to see this faith fundamentally revised, for he believed it to be in accordance with the Word of God. Our Church owes not a little to one who, for twenty-three years, with learning and power, continued to instruct successive classes of students, and to bear no secondary part in moulding the sentiments and character of a ministry who have been faithful to the truth and to their high commission.

Dr. Willis was well read in the Reformation and post-Reformation theology. He was at home in the works of Maestricht, Turretine, Ames, Witsius, etc., as in those of the great English theologians of the seventeenth century. His knowledge of Patristic literature far surpassed that of most Presbyterian divines, and was not equalled by many of the class whose reading is supposed to lie more in the early centuries of the Church.

As a preacher Dr. Willis must be ranked high. His matter was excellent, his discourses were usually constructed with care, and his language was always correct and vigorous—often highly felicitous. His delivery was very effective: it was natural and varied, but earnest and rapid, sometimes impassioned. By these excellences of ministration he gathered around him in Glasgow a numerous and intelligent congregation; nor will the pulpit services which, during his long connection with Knox College, he rendered in many parts of our own land be soon forgotten. It was delightful on communion occasions to listen to his rich evangelical utterances as he unfolded the treasures of the covenant of grace. The volume of "Academic Prelections and Sermons," published after he retired from his professorship, fairly represents his characteristic merits in both kinds of discourse. Some of these productions are admirable in literary form, while they all bear testimony to their author's soundness in the faith and the highly scriptural and varied character of his teaching.

As an ecclesiastic, also, Dr. Willis deserves to be remembered. He was leader of the Original Burgher Presbytery previous to its union with the Church of Scotland; but he had little opportunity of taking a very prominent part in the non-intrusion controversy,

or in moulding the Free Church after the formation of that important body. On several occasions, however, he delivered able speeches on the topics of the day, and in various lectures and essays he expounded the principles of the Disruption with ability and eloquence. In the Canadian Church his influence was decisively felt in many important discussions, but he avoided any undue prominence in the Church courts, though he most faithfully and ably discharged whatever duties they laid upon him. The minutes of synod show that he bore a highly useful and honorable part in the deliberations of that body, and many an important deliverance was framed by his skilful hand. During the greater part of its progress he strenuously opposed the movement which resulted in the Union of 1861 ; but the writer of this notice may be allowed to testify to the excellent spirit in which he accepted that Union when it had been accomplished, and to the hearty kindness, trustfulness and generosity with which he ever treated the new brethren with whom he was now associated.

The briefest sketch of Dr. Willis must refer to his labors as a philanthropist. In Scotland he wrote and spoke with much earnestness on the subject of the Poor Laws. On this question he found himself in opposition to the illustrious Chalmers, for he insisted on the necessity of general public provision being made for the poor. We do not propose to discuss the correctness of his views, but his benevolence was strongly evinced in the zealous and persistent advocacy of opinions which he deemed highly important not only in the interests of the poor but of the entire commonwealth.

In the anti-slavery movement he was truly a champion. His speeches on this question were fervid and powerful, and he stood side by side with the illustrious men who aroused the conscience of Britain upon a great and flagrant wrong ; nor did he forbear his testimony whenever the principles of freedom seemed to him to be compromised. To the end of his life he enthusiastically supported every effort to improve the condition of the emancipated, and nothing would more readily move him to indignant protest than any attempt to defend slavery from the Bible. He would permit no man to find an argument for slavery in the *δούλος* of the New Testament. Many a colored family in Toronto could speak of the

kindness of Dr. Willis. Perhaps the very last visit which he paid here was to a family of the class which he had so often befriended.

Dr. Willis was a man of genuine piety. He greatly delighted in prayer, and his friends well remember that their intercourse with him, whether in some common task or in social life, was frequently and with entire absence of ostentation closed with words addressed to the throne of grace. Peculiarities of feeling and manner he certainly had, and pleasant anecdotes illustrative of these will continue to be told by the generation who knew him; but the great lines of his character were unselfish and noble, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada will place his name high on the roll of her eminent men.

WM. CAVEN.

MISSION WORK A PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY.

I HAVE been asked by the editors of KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY to prepare a short article on Home Missions, with special reference to the work that has been, and is being, prosecuted with so much success by our Church for these many years. The subject, like that of Foreign Missions, is so familiar, that possibly it now fails to awaken the deep interest of earlier days. Not that our people are insensible to the importance of Missions to the well-being of any living Church, but simply because they are so thoroughly conversant with its progress, and give so systematically for its support, that nothing further need be said in order to enlist their sympathy.

NO LONGER A DEBATABLE QUESTION.

It is indeed reason for gratitude that the cause of missions, whether Home or Foreign, is no longer subject of debate among Christians, or in Church courts. Differences of opinion may exist as to modes of operation, and as to the clamant necessities of special fields, but there are none whatever as to the perpetual obligation that rests upon Christian Churches to give the gospel to the world. The man who thinks lightly of evangelical work at home or abroad, cannot be a follower of the blessed Master—of him who said, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"; or of Paul, who, when pleading in behalf of the Gentile world, used these words: "How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.'" On the general subject of Home Missions so much has been said and written during the last fifteen years, that it almost seems as if little more could be advanced. The annual reports submitted to the General Assembly, which embrace not only the work done directly by the presbyteries, but by

THE STUDENTS' MISSIONARY SOCIETIES,

and the voluminous correspondence that appears in our religious journals from week to week, giving in detail the labors of our missionaries and students in more remote, and hitherto uncultivated fields, leaves little further to be said. If the members and adherents of the "Presbyterian Church in Canada," are not thoroughly saturated with the condition and necessities of the home field, and have not their sympathies enlisted, and their liberality invoked on behalf of those who are holding the frontier posts of our land, it certainly is not from lack of information.

Much of our success as a Church, in the expansion of Home Mission work, is due to the labors of our students during the summer months, and to the sustained occupancy by the Students' Missionary Societies, of fields beyond the reach of the regular missionary. The work of exploration, or as Dr. Chalmers called it, "excavation"—of gathering together the scattered tribes of Israel; of laying the foundations of what in subsequent years may become, and have become, self-sustaining congregations, is, we apprehend, not sufficiently appreciated by the Church at large, nor its importance realized. This is the work which our Students' Missionary Societies undertake, and this is what for many years they have been engaged in, *with little or no expense* to the Central Home Mission Committee. The rapid increase of preaching stations in the North-West Territories and in the Muskoka field, is almost, if not entirely, due to the self-denying labors of students and catechists. They

began the work which has now assumed such gigantic proportions, and almost overtakes the energies and resources of the Church.

REFLEX INFLUENCE UPON THE STUDENTS.

That such labors have a most blessed reflex influence upon the students themselves, we cannot doubt. There are lessons learned in Home Mission work, during summer vacations, that are of inestimable value through life. The house to house visitation, which compels almost constant exercise in the open air, and the somewhat rough but hospitable entertainment that the backwoods country yet affords, are not without their physical and social advantages to young men, whether beginning or ending their academic course. Better far than the tonics and prescriptions of the druggist or physician, is the pure air of the boundless prairies, or even the rocky boulders and corduroy road of our northern regions, for the sedentary recluse, who, for six winter months, has been poring over Greek and Hebrew roots, studying the "Institutes of Calvin," and the dialectics of the Schoolmen!

But these are but the least advantages to the student of work in the mission field.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN NATURE

gained by coming into contact with men placed in widely different circumstances—many of them beginning life anew—with all the hardships and anxieties incident to such a condition—furnishes a training school for the real work of life, which cannot be found in the best equipped university. There is an impression abroad, that many of our younger ministers know but little of the practical side of ministerial life; that where they fail of success, is not so much for lack of scholarship, nor yet of aptness to teach, as for want of that tact and prudence, and common sense, which are so useful—nay, essential, in the management of congregations, and so conducive to lengthened and happy pastorates. It may be so in the old world—it ought not to be so in Canada. Young men who pass from school to college, and from college to the divinity hall; who are the sons in many cases of rich or well-to-do families—without the necessity, to use a common expression, of

"WORKING THEIR WAY THROUGH COLLEGE,"

either by teaching or other employments, are, we submit, but ill-

fitted for the care of souls, in the best and most comprehensive sense of the word. There may be unquestioned piety, and there may be learning far in advance of the average Canadian student, and eloquence and pulpit power in addition, but there cannot be that sympathy and closeness of contact between minister and people, which is so highly valued by many who need wise counsels and cheerful words in the struggle of existence. It was the good fortune of the writer, for nearly eleven years of his early life, to stand behind the counter and the desk, and take part in the details of a business that demanded both faith and patient plodding labor. Faith was needed, that the means would in some way be provided to meet daily payments, when to human foresight the prospects were often dark and unpropitious—and along with faith, there was demanded constant and persistent labor both of body and mind. Such a hard school of experience brings one into contact with phases of life and practical questions, never discussed in college halls, and gives an aptitude for dealing with special cases that come under notice in the actual work of the ministry—which lie beyond the limits of Pastoral Theology, however well and wisely taught.

The average congregations in Canada are very largely composed of the middle and working classes. Exceptions there are, where the rich are the most numerous, but the rule is otherwise. And it is well that it is so. A congregation wholly composed of the one or the other, is not the best fitted to carry out the great ends contemplated by the Christian Church. It is therefore necessary that the minister should have in a marked degree the power of adaptation to all classes—a gift which mere scholarship can never furnish. If the young physician, before entering upon the more arduous and delicate work of his profession, must spend a certain period under the eye of an old practitioner, and the lawyer before he is called to the bar, in addition to his legal studies and examinations, be articulated for a number of years to some well-known barrister, surely it is none the less necessary, that young men preparing for the highest vocation possible in this life, should in the mission field, under the careful direction of presbyteries or of some experienced pastor, learn something of the anxieties and trials that are incident to the office of the holy ministry.

PULPIT POWER.

But this is not all that experience in the mission field gives to an earnest student. It prepares him in a high degree for pulpit excellence, which, after all, is the most important qualification in a minister of the gospel. I should not like to say, as is sometimes said, that if a minister fails in the pulpit he fails everywhere. Many good men, accounted failures in the pulpit by their more eloquent brethren, have retained the affections of large and influential congregations for many years, because of their singular fidelity in other departments of pastoral work. But while this is granted, the pulpit must ever be regarded as the crowning glory of the ministry.

"A good man makes a good preacher," it is often said. Not invariably, unless there is added a good natural and practical power of communication. Without piety, and Biblical knowledge and Theological training *of some kind*, no man should seek to enter the ministry, but these alone do not constitute or insure aptness to teach. As Dr. Johnson once said, "All the lecturing in the world will not enable a man to make a shoe," so neither will the studies and drill of the best-equipped divinity hall, without practice on the part of the student, make a graceful, earnest and impressive speaker.

THE MISSION FIELD,

therefore, in a very important sense, supplements the teaching of the class-room. It gives ample opportunity for using natural gifts and acquired knowledge in a more informal and less conventional style than belongs to the regularly settled ministry. Not that there should be less conscientious preparation for speaking to the few than to the many, or that souls are not as precious in the log-cabin and school-house, as in the fashionable and crowded church, but with more homely surroundings, there is necessarily less of that fear and embarrassment which frequently attend the young preacher and appal him when he first stands up before a large and critical audience.

Some years since, the writer spent an evening in conversation with one of the most popular ministers of New York City. The remark was casually made, that ministers in matured life regarded their early pulpit efforts with feelings of humiliation, and often

wondered that congregations sat under such florid and commonplace homilies. He replied in substance: "I have not found it so. I preach to-day, with little alteration, the same discourses that I prepared and preached in the first years of my ministry, when laboring as a missionary in a district where the manners and customs of the people were of the most primitive kind." Why so, it may be asked? Because, added to a naturally chaste and simple, but withal, fervid and forcible style, he made the most ample preparation for his work.

In this connection let me say that it is a great mistake to suppose that the people who attend our services in the distant mission fields of our Dominion, have less intelligence and can do with poorer preaching, than those in our towns and cities. In bygone years, the Colonies of Great Britain were regarded in the Old World as a sort of refuge for ministers who had proved their

INCOMPETENCY TO PREACH,

by long years of unsuccessful candidating. And is there not in Canada something of the same feeling still, respecting the more sparsely settled frontier districts, and do not the representatives of presbyteries at times, in their choice of missionaries, act upon this presumption? Does not the difference in allowance paid to a Theological and an Arts student, sometimes decide the choice? The pressing necessities of our immense Home Mission territory doubtless force us to use all available talent, but in some cases it is to the hurt of the mission stations, if not a positive injustice and permanent injury to the young student, who is but ill-prepared to speak and preach upon themes with which he has neither the theoretical nor experimental knowledge, possessed by many of his congregation.

But, notwithstanding these drawbacks, and many others that are constantly advanced against the employment of students, we believe that the advantages to the Church and to the young men themselves, greatly preponderate. Our most successful preachers and pastors are those who have given their summer vacations, and perhaps the winter months also, to the more informal and less elaborate presentation of gospel truth in difficult mission fields—in

Bible classes, Sunday-school work and house to house visitation. The greatest dangers are, that, minimizing the supreme importance of their work, students should pursue a slipshod style of preparation, or that they should be sent by presbyteries to fields beyond, or not adapted to their peculiar abilities.

WM. COCHRANE.

THE STOCKPORT SUNDAY SCHOOL.

It has occurred to me that as in London I am always so busy as to render it almost impossible to fulfil my promise to you, I would take advantage of an hour's leisure here to give you some account of the Stockport Sunday School, whose anniversary services I have just been conducting. I had always thought that, in order to see the largest development of Sunday School enterprise, the Englishman had to cross the Atlantic; but I doubt it now, for I know not where else than in this town of Stockport could be found a school with over five thousand names on its register, exclusive of a staff of four hundred and fifty-eight teachers. This school is now a hundred years old, and it is computed that from the beginning as many as a hundred thousand scholars have passed through it. It has always been a union school, and for a great part of the time had all the field to itself; but, as the town has grown up to its present size (about sixty thousand), the different churches have, one after another, found it desirable to have their own congregational schools; and yet, such has been the hold which the original institution had on the community, that it has continued to hold its place and do its work with undiminished power.

The central building is very large. Seen from the back, it looks like a great quadrangular mill. The front elevation is also quite plain and unpretending, and yet presents an appearance, rising as it does on its elevated ground above the buildings round about, not out of keeping with the noble purpose to which the structure is devoted. Thirty-six hundred of the scholars are accommodated in this central building, the rest are housed in four branch schools in different parts of the town.

There are three great divisions. The senior division consists of two great classes of young men and young women, at present numbering about three hundred each. These are subdivided into twelve classes, each with a separate teacher, and with separate retiring rooms, where the work of the classes is done, the exercises in which the whole division take part at once being held in the large class-room.

The intermediate division, managed in much the same way, with large class-rooms and small retiring rooms, consists of all the boys and girls who are far enough advanced to take part in those writing exercises which are a distinctive feature of the school.

The junior division includes all the younger children, and really consists of a number of separate schools, each having a superintendent of its own and a distinct staff of teachers. There is also a large separate infant class.

In the centre of the building there is an immense hall, capable of holding three thousand, where the whole school meets together for the opening exercises at 9 a.m. At 10 the separate schools and classes are constituted. In the higher divisions the exercises alternate between writing in the large class-rooms and lessons in the small retiring rooms. Half of each large division are engaged in writing, while the other half are in the separate rooms, alternating each with each at set times. By this means one-half the number of retiring rooms is needed, each one serving two classes. The writing exercise includes the copying of Scripture texts, the answering of questions, the writing of hymns or striking passages from Christian authors, often at dictation, encouragement being given especially to the older scholars, to seek out portions for themselves, which have impressed them so much in their private reading as to make them anxious to copy them out in their writing-books.

The school is practically in session the whole day, the hours being 9 to 12 and 2 to 4. One would naturally enquire at this point, what of the relation of this engrossing school life to the Church? I have not been long enough here to venture an answer, but I am glad to be able to say this much, that an earnest effort is made to keep up the connection by arranging that a por-

tion of the school shall attend Divine worship every Lord's day in some one of the churches or chapels, while there is also a monthly sermon preached to the whole school in the large room.

The anniversary is, as might be expected, a great occasion. At 11 a.m., the large hall is packed to its remotest corners with children and young people, with their teachers, no others being admitted at that hour, so as to leave all the space for the school itself. The exercises are, of course, appropriate to the young, with the exception of a few words to the teachers. The evening service, however, from 6 to 8, is the grand feature. The great hall is packed in every part with an immense audience, embracing all ranks and classes, from mayor and alderman (on this occasion the election being at hand the two rival candidates for Parliament were present, one on the left, the other on the right of the platform) to the poorest of the people. And it is not a mere mass-meeting of the churches, for they are all open as usual, though probably not so largely attended as usual; and yet not only was the hall crowded in every part, but there were listeners throughout the service in adjoining rooms and in the outer halls, and several had to go away. And this, or something like it, occurs every anniversary, so that it bears witness to the extraordinary hold which the school has on the people of the place. The amount of money raised in connection with the anniversary is always over £400. This time it was £472 9s. 4d.

I hope this long recital will not prove tedious, but I have no doubt you will understand how one may catch so much the enthusiasm of the time and place as to make it something of a relief to write some little account of it to friends at a distance.

J. MUNRO GIBSON.

CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.

NEARLY two thousand times has the circling year brought round the anniversary of Christ's birth. From almost twenty centuries of years have been returned the echoes first awakened among the hills of Judea. The name of the child thus obscurely born has become a household word in countless myriads of homes, and has been heralded the whole world over. What vast treasure has been expend-

ed, how many heroic lives have been freely sacrificed in carrying to every nation the gospel of Jesus! Men have everywhere been teaching the lesson that the principles of that gospel ought to be the foundation of the entire structure of life and effort. The question comes to us this Christmas Day: What is the amount of the influence of that perfect life upon the actual work-a-day life of the world? Is this busy world of ours listening with intent ears to the song the shepherds heard as they kept their vigil under the stars of that eastern sky? Amid the noise of earth's trafficking, amid the din of earth's battle, can we detect the sweet, clear notes of heavenly music? It will not be unprofitable for us, surely, on this day, to consider to what extent the world, now nineteen centuries older, is listening to and profiting by the teaching of Him from whose birth its age is numbered. Is the world moving with slow, tortuous, often interrupted progress towards a realization of the ideal kingdom proclaimed by the thorn-crowned Nazarene? What answer to this question do we read in the "signs of the times"?

Let us remember that what we read on the fluent page of human history will depend very much on the eyes we bring to the task. In the window of this room overlooking the village nestling in the hollow, are panes of red, of blue and of yellow. When I look through the first pane, a flood of crimson light is poured upon the scene. The warm, rich color is like that of bright curtains shutting out December's storm and cold. How different when I look through the blue pane! The sun seems to have lost all its grateful warmth. All beneath looks cold—so cold that I shiver and involuntarily turn to stir the wood fire into brighter blaze. But I turn away more quickly from the yellow pane. For it gives a tint of jaundiced melancholy to sun and snowy cloud-heaps and evergreens that crown the opposite heights.

So might one look upon the course of human events and see nothing but rose-color. The pitchy blackness of crime, the purple of pride and vanity, the smirched white of imperfect virtue would be unseen by such an observer. Or the scene might be so viewed as that the observer would see nothing but the wintry blue of hardness, and grasping and grinding miserly exaction. Nor are there wanting those whose vision shows them nothing but gloom and depression and bilious despondency. Let us avoid all these deceiving

colors and look at things in the white light of truth. If we do this, what progress do we find towards a realization of the principles laid down by the great Teacher?

No truth, perhaps, was insisted upon with more earnestness by the Heaven-born Teacher than that of the solidarity of the human race. When the two commands, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," are made the twin pillars on which to rear the temple of a perfect manhood, there is plainly taught the unity of all men as moral beings, in respect of their interests, their development, their perfection. No man can become all that he has it in him to be unless there be a corresponding development in every member of the human family. Just as the displacement of a grain of sand on the Atlantic shore changes the centre of gravity of the remotest planet, so the moral progress and development of the dusky African in his gloomy jungle home is an indispensable condition of the progress and development of the proudest European.

Is not this principle being recognized, or, at least, acted upon without conscious recognition, now as never before? Does it not make itself felt as well in what we are apt to consider dark blots on the fair page of our civilization as in what are deemed the proudest boasts of that civilization?

This is an age notable for philanthropic effort. The poor we have yet with us. Lazarus still sits at the rich man's gate—covered with sores. The skirts of virtuous matrons and pure maidens are brushed by those of the votaries or the victims of unholy vice. We turn from the song that fills the bright drawing-room to listen to the maudlin ditty of the drunken woman. Youthful strength and purity go down—sometimes with all too little hindrance—the ever-darkening road leading to blighting and death. But let us note that, oftener than formerly, the cry of Lazarus penetrates to the rich man's feasting chamber, the virtuous are more ready to exhibit their virtue in seeking to rescue the vicious instead of thrusting them out of the way of their holiness into darker corners to rot into deeper corruption. Men, strong in their manly self-control, oftener strive to impart some of their virile force to their weaker brethren. What does all this indicate, if not that men are coming to know that it is only as members of a perfectly developed *society* that the

individual can reach his own highest development? *Nihil humani alienum* is true in the sense that nothing promotive of the moral development of my neighbor,—and the despised, the unholy, the alien Samaritan, is yet my neighbor—can be without its conditioning influence upon the realization of the possibilities that are in me. And can we not recognize, with thankfulness, that in the philanthropy of our day this truth is receiving an extension and an intension of application unknown before?

The air is full, in these days, of socialistic schemes. When these are propounded and believed in by men who are anything but builders of air-castles, it becomes imperative upon thinking men to ascertain what amount of truth there may be amid the chaff of impracticable theories and mere restless discontent with things as they are. At the bottom of all such plans for the further re-adjustment of affairs, there lies the consciousness that men are not independent of one another, but have rights and duties that are reciprocal. It may be true that socialists insist more strongly and loudly upon their rights than upon their duties. True it is, undoubtedly, that any re-arrangement of society tending to diminish self-reliance on the part of individuals, cannot stand the test of time. But whatever be the mistakes made by these zealous reformers, he must glance at events very carelessly who does not see in all such movements a struggling for opportunities of development on the part of those who have too long been looked upon as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water to their more favored fellow mortals; but who are in truth co-members of a vast moral commonwealth whose corporate progress is a condition of, even though it be in turn dependent on, the progress of its individual members. The true socialism is the doctrine that the self-realization of one man is dependent on that of his fellow-man. It is, then, at his own proper peril that the rich, powerful master prevents the development of all the faculties of his fustian-clad servant. Place all socialistic plans in the crucible, burn away from them all wild, visionary, fanatical notions, and there is left this underlying idea of the family relationship existing among the members of the whole human race, and of the reciprocal dependence of the growth and development of one member and the growth and development of all other members of that family.

A true philosophy of human life teaches that the end for man is self-realization. Born with certain powers and faculties, the end of life for him is the development to their fullest extent of these powers and faculties. That the chief good for man is the actualization of all the possibilities of his nature is a doctrine as old as Socrates. Any real advance that has been made in moral philosophy since the time of Socrates and his followers, has been in the direction of deepening the intension of human virtues and widening the range of persons to whom man as a moral agent is brought into relation. *Fortitude* means much more in a Christian missionary than in a Greek hero. *Temperance* has deeper intension in the writings of the nineteenth century philosopher than it had in the teaching of Socrates. So, also, is it that the range of persons considered in the fixing of a moral standard has been widened. The Greek never thought of applying his standard to the Barbarian. The modern moralist must have a standard applicable to all men everywhere. This standard is an ideal perfection of character. This ideal is being constantly realized in the life of the moral man. And it is only realized in the life of the individual as it is progressively realized in the life of the race. Perfection in the individual is only possible in a perfect state of society. The truest philosophy, as well as the religion of the Divine Teacher, teaches that, if we would be what we can be, we must not concentrate our attention on our own development, but place the development of others on the same footing in our estimation as our own. To the Jews long ago came the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." In this modern city of ours, the philosopher to whom many readers of this journal owe so much, lays down, as the standard of moral action, the same command—lays it down as a result of the latest and freshest thought on morality.

These are the thoughts that come to me on this Christmas Day. They come, bringing with them a feeling of exultation in the grandeur of human destiny, but, alas! a feeling of sadness, too, when I am forced to remember how imperfectly it is being realized. How seldom do we remember in our work-a-day life our relation to the people whose elbows we brush! Oh that the Christmas of 1826 may find us all nearer by a year's march to the actualization of the ideal set before us as individuals! Forgetful let us be no

longer that this can only be the case, if, by our own efforts and their own, men the world over are made better and true. Nor can we forget on this Christmas Day, that perfect life that appeared to show us what ours might be.

. "Follow the Christ,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
Else, wherefore born?"

J. McD. DUNCAN.

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE. .

It was night on a hill by the sea.
A rising breeze ruffled the waters
And fluttered the woods on the coast ;
The massing clouds gorgeously towered o'erhead :
Below, the pouty waves plashed on the beach ;
Above, the shrill scream of the bird for its prey
Pierced the night air like the thrill of a pain.
But lo ! far away to the south
The cumulous clouds were breaking ;
And the cold round moon through the ragged sky
Cast a silver shaft o'er the glancing sea
To the height on the shore.
Silently a vessel hove,
With shapely outline, into sight ;
It tarried not, but glided along
Across the space, without a sound
To break the quiet of the scene.
Soon o'er foresail, then o'er mainsail,
The shadow stole, the darkness grew
Till it faded from the view
And was buried in the gloom.
It is the story of our life
That briefly breaks into eternity.
From the dim past, the spirit comes ;
Through crying childhood and laughing boyhood,
Through glowing youth-time and caring manhood,
To the ripe old age serene,
That dreams of the past and waits for the tomb,
We trace the spirit's solemn course
Across the narrow length of life
To the mystery of Futurity.
Whence, or whither, who may know ?
Asks the drear Agnostic's creed.

Newmarket.

J. C. SMITH.



Missionary.

THE NORTH-WEST MISSION FIELD.

THE ordinary Ontario citizen finds it difficult to understand the importance attached to the North-West. To be understood, the country must be seen. Time will reveal what a splendid possession Canada owns in that land, and the Church will appreciate the rare opportunity presented for the prosecution of Christian work. The North-West is five or six times as large as the rest of the Dominion. It possesses vast areas of agricultural and pasture lands. The coal fields are extensive, and the other mineral wealth of great value. A few years ago flour was imported; it is computed that 7,000,000 bushels of wheat can be spared for export this year. Roller mills, with a daily capacity of 3,000 barrels, are now running. That the change has inspired confidence in the future of the country is evident from the money invested in branch railways, the capital sent to Winnipeg by loan companies, and the enhanced value of the shares of land companies. In spite of injury done by frost, immigrants have been coming in and settlement has been extending. To-day half a million cattle are being pastured at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and the number is rapidly increasing. The roseate hues in which the country was painted a few years ago did harm. The country has its drawbacks, and it is well that these should be known. It possesses genuine merits, however, and energy and enterprise, industry and thrift, alone are required to turn these to good account. Were it necessary, numerous illustrations could be given in proof. The Dominion Government believes in the future of the country, else why spend such large sums in opening up? The Presbyterian Church believes in its future, else why spend two-thirds of the H.M. revenue of the Western Section and one-seventh the revenue of the Augmentation Committee for Christian work there? Other denominations believe in its future, else why follow us so closely and lament that they cannot do more? The prospects of the country, the character of the people settling it, and the influence of present action on future generations should stimulate us to intelligent and earnest effort.

At present our Church is in advance of any other denomination in its home mission work, whether the number of adherents, of stations supplied, of churches erected, or of missionaries employed, or all of these combined, be made the standard of comparison. This is admitted by all—Methodist, Episcopalian, and Baptist. Last summer 81 fields were occupied (some requiring two missionaries), and 6 catechists, 31 students, 34 ordained missionaries, and 14 pastors of augmented congregations supplied them. Whether we shall maintain our lead and prestige depends, humanly speaking, largely on the missionary and self-sacrificing spirit of our young ministers and on the intelligence and liberality of our people.

The growth of our work has been rapid. In 1881, when the Superintendent of Missions was appointed, our stations did not number 120; to-day they are 340. Since 1882 there have been erected in the mission field 55 new churches, 11 manses, and 3 church-manses, at a cost of not less than \$160,000. When it is borne in mind that from 1883 to the present time has been a period of severe depression in the North-West, the extent of the growth can be better understood. During these four years families and communicants have trebled and contributions quintupled.

The area of settlement—not to speak of settlements along the North Saskatchewan, which are comparatively small—is about 30,000,000 acres, and the population less than 200,000. Of course the settlers are very much scattered. Small towns and villages are growing along the railways, and these are made centres of Christian work. Not until the C.P.R. Co. dispose of their lands and H.B. Co. and School lands are settled shall we have large country congregations. There are on an average four stations or rather more to a group, and almost fifty families constitute a charge.

Organization is imperfect from causes that readily suggest themselves. Many of the people are young and never made any profession of faith. They are restless often from the desire of accumulating wealth rapidly; they are strangers to each other, and hence it does not seem wise to elect sessions till congregations gain some strength and compactness. Managers are always elected at the outset.

There are defects in connection with the work that the facts and figures given above will suggest. Students constituted 35 per cent.

of our staff last summer. Including amounts paid by students' missionary societies, travelling expenses to and from the field exceeded \$2,500. The loss sustained in disposing of horses in autumn would bring up the figure to nearly \$3,000. Students are engaged because other supply is not forthcoming. Nor is the loss in money alone. Fields occupied during the summer and in good heart in autumn are left unsupplied during winter, or other denominations step in when students leave, and we sow while others reap. There are at present three self-sustaining congregations without pastors, and more than twenty-five giving over the amount required to put them on the augmented list. They are anxious to call pastors, but how can they call when men are not available? There are, moreover, 1,200 families of our Church this winter without any supply, and many others with occasional supply. When it is added that fifteen per cent. of the young men settling in the country have not made any profession of faith in Christ, and that the ratio of communicants to families is only half of what it is in Ontario, enough is said to show the desirability of a change.

The evil of neglecting any district or allowing the good habit of church attendance to be broken up is often painfully seen. There are districts where ten per cent. of the people do not attend church. In one settlement visited two of the congregation I addressed had not attended a service in fourteen years, and another had not heard a sermon during nine years. Another man in the neighborhood had attended service only three times in his life and he had a family. Infidelity is very prevalent in the district, and I fear it was practical before it became speculative. At any rate, it was prudent to keep one's skin whole, wash the hands frequently, and use one's own towels. To write what was seen and heard would be only to shock, and hence it can only be hinted at.

The class of men required for this field are men of intelligence and scholarship. I have seen a first-class classic driving a mule-team. Piety and push, tact and prudence are indispensable. Young men are in demand because they can endure hardness. This class are not offering largely for any of the more difficult home mission fields, and hence the Supreme Court of the Church has had to pass measures calculated to thrust forth laborers into the harvest field. We want volunteers, not conscripts.

The climate is to some a deterrent. It is in winter severe, but it is salubrious. The autumn of 1885 did not end till December. The weather was dry and pleasant. The depression and frosts have frightened many. The country is recovering from the effects of both. Salaries are not paid in full. Sometimes they are not, but in the great majority of cases they are. And should disaster overtake a settlement the ministers would be the last to insist on the full amount of the bond. Instances of great magnanimity could be given. One of our missionaries wrote lately: "I am pressed very much to return East. I am offered \$1,200 and a manse, which would be equal to \$2,500 here. But don't be afraid, I am not going. Not I. I send you, however, a bill of what it costs to live here monthly, and I include, as you see, no luxury greater than an apple dessert occasionally, and it foots up \$111.75. Could you not make the salary \$112?" Would that we had a score of this class! He is not a Knox man. But a Knox man is a corner post in our synod. His salary would not enable him to board, much less to get married. He built a *shack* and keeps bachelor's hall. These men enjoy their work. One of the Knox graduates wrote that work was much needed along the railway, that he was willing to undertake it, and that if the H.M.C. could not afford a salary, that he would try and get along without.

Speaking of Knox College leads me to say that of late years she has not done for this field all that was expected. We may have expected too much. Knox sent here the pioneer missionary of our Church, Dr. Black. The Rev. James Nesbit, if I mistake not, was also one of its graduates, and he was our first missionary to the Indians. When the Presbytery of Manitoba was organized every clerical member of it was from Knox. It had the honor of sending the Rev. Dr. Bryce, who has done such good service in connection with Manitoba College, and the Rev. D. B. Whimster, whose work rendered necessary the inception of college work. To-day, however, scarcely twenty-five per cent. of our ministers are *alumni* of Knox. Since the North-West was, at the outset, largely a colony from Western Ontario, and Knox was the nearest College, we expected its graduates to make our work their own. We make no reflections, but ministers who come from Knox, just because they love the College, feel always called on to explain and excuse.

The last few years have rendered it abundantly evident, however, that our fields will not be supplied from the East, and that our dependence must more and more be in years to come on Manitoba College. The graduating class in Knox College this year is large. Will half a dozen not volunteer to accept appointments in the North-West? There will be plenty of timid, I will not say ambitious, candidates for "eligible charges" in Ontario.

J. ROBERTSON.

THE FREE STATE OF CENTRAL AFRICA.*

ONLY some eight years have elapsed since Stanley emerged from his perilous journey through the unknown regions of the Dark Continent, and almost perishing from fatigue and hunger reached the mouth of the Congo with his straggling band. At that time the civilized world was filled with wonder by his story of the interior of this continent. Two years from his emerging he again appeared at the mouth of the Congo, to conquer a kingdom—not by force of arms, though; but by words and deeds of kindness. And now he has sent forth to the world two handsome volumes telling of his journeys, and of the work he has been enabled to accomplish. In the name of the African International Society, whose chief agent he is, he has already made over four hundred treaties with some two thousand chieftains, great and small, living along the banks of the Congo. A short time since, a conference in Europe, at which were represented the principal nations of the civilized world, the freedom of this Congo State was recognized. A new nation has sprung into existence, and that in a day.

The Congo State comprises, with the exception of one small part, the whole district drained by the Congo river—a stretch of country bordered on the east by the great lakes and on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, and extending from the watershed of the Sharé and Bhar-el-Ghazal on the north to that of the Zambesi on the south. The boundaries at the southwest are not strictly defined. The greatest length of this Free State is 1,400 miles, and its width 1,200 miles. It contains about 1,300,000 square miles, or one-tenth of Africa.

* A paper read before the Knox College Missionary Society.

The Free Territory, which includes the Congo State, extends to the Indian Ocean, excluding the drainage of the Victoria Nyanza and including Lake Nyassa. This immense territory includes practically the whole of equatorial Africa, and is to be open to the free trade of all nations for twenty years. At the end of that period the powers represented in the Berlin Conference—the conference mentioned above as having guaranteed the freedom of the Congo State—are to decide whether the free commerce shall be continued.

Geographically this is the finest portion of the continent. Its average elevation cannot be much less than 3,000 feet above the level of the sea, and much of it lies 5,000, and even 7,000, feet above the sea level—covered with tropical vegetation even at this elevation. The great lake region lies fully within it. The highest mountain peaks are found here, covered with perpetual snow though under an equatorial sun. The greatest rivers take their rise within the heart of it: the Nile at the north pouring its fertilizing tide into the Mediterranean Sea; the Congo traversing nearly three thousand miles in its circuitous route to the Atlantic Ocean; the Zambesi at the south also traversing three-fourths of the width of the continent, but making an outlet into the Indian Ocean. So wonderful is this net-work of great lakes and rivers that it lies entirely within the limits of possibility that in the progress of the centuries these great waterways may be so connected as to make continuous navigation possible from ocean to ocean, and from Alexandria to the mouths of the Congo and the Zambesi. Besides these rivers are the Coanza and the Ogowe, fine streams of navigable water flowing eastward into the Atlantic, the one at the north, the other at the south of the Congo. The lakes are noble waters, rivalling our magnificent chain of fresh inland seas, with the probability that we have not yet found the last of them. The *Foreign Missionary* says of the district:—"At present the basin of the Congo is covered for the most part with dense forests of many species of valuable woods. Elephants now abound, and ivory is the chief export; but with commercial facilities to the coast that country would supply the lumber markets of the world. At the same time the clearing of the forests would add to the healthfulness of the country and present broad acres for remunerative agriculture." This area in its virgin condition, and with none of the agencies of civilization developing

its possibilities, even now supports a vast population. Between forty and fifty millions of people are there, despite the terrible ravages of the slave trade.

The great natural highway of the new State is the River Congo, which flows through the centre of the land. The Congo has its chief source in Lake Bangweolo. It runs northward eight hundred miles, and then, turning southwest, empties into the Atlantic, two thousand nine hundred miles from its source. Going up the Congo is said to be very like going up a flight of stairs. For the first 110 miles we pass up a broad stream, in some places two or three miles in width, with dense forests lining its banks, and with scarcely a building to be seen. This brings us to Vivi, a village at the head of navigation. Here we must disembark and journey on foot 185 miles, climbing the banks of thirty different cataracts. At the head of these cataracts is found the rude village of Leopoldville, built on an expansion of the river called Stanley Pool. From this place to Stanley Falls navigation is unobstructed. We may sail for a thousand miles. In this fine stretch of country Stanley tells us there are many sections that remind one of Eden's loveliness, rich in all products which give prosperity to a nation. Having ascended the river to Stanley Falls, we may pass up some of its tributaries, many of which are navigable for long distances, making an aggregate of 3,500 miles besides the main channel.

The government of this new state is in the hands of the International African Association. This Association owes its origin to the exertions of Leopold II., King of the Belgians. In 1876, on his invitation there assembled in Brussels a congress of delegates from the principal geographical societies of Europe and America. This congress declared its objects to be, to extend civilization through Central Africa, and devised as a means thereto the establishment of stations which should give hospitality and protection to all travellers, and aid the white man, whether scientist, trader, explorer, or missionary. An organization was formed consisting of an executive committee of three, representing the English-speaking, Germanic and Latin races respectively, under the presidency of King Leopold. Each nation represented there has a branch organization. It is now no longer a secret that the funds to provide for the enormous expense attendant upon opening up this great region,

of founding and keeping up twenty-two stations, with their small army of defenders and employees, their seven steamers, etc., are all supplied from the private resources of King Leopold. For some years past he has been devoting £100,000 yearly to carrying out the schemes of the Association.

The inhabitants of this Central State number, as we have said, nearly fifty millions—almost as many people as in the whole of the United States of America. They are made up of many tribes, not one of which can ever say that it is living on terms of amity with all its neighbors. Yet these men are splendid specimens of humanity, both physically and mentally. The races of the Congo are far superior to the negroes of the coast in appearance, stature and intelligence. They are races of great natural capacity and possibilities upon the testimony of everyone qualified to speak, from Stanley to Livingstone; so that Prof. Smith, of Edinburgh, feels warranted in the bold declaration, "that they are as good stuff to make men of as were the ancient Britons, from whom we are sprung." Stanley, in describing the Waganda, one of the most important tribes, says that they are tall and slender in person, and that he has seen hundreds of them above six feet two inches in height. He tells also that they surpass other African tribes in craft and fraud; but this he takes as an indication of their superior intelligence. This is borne out by many proofs. Their clothes are of a finer make; their dwellings are neater; their spears are the most perfect in Africa, in Stanley's estimation; and they exhibit extraordinary skill and knowledge in the use of that deadly weapon; their shields are such as would attract admiration in any land, while their canoes surpass all the canoes of the savage world. These people can easily be won by kindness. It is especially pleasing to find that the very tribes which fought so fiercely when Stanley came down the river in 1877, were with no great difficulty won to friendliness on his return. The African is not such a savage as some of us suppose.

With these people superstition is religion, and religion is superstition. They are, many of them, Mohammedan in name, but pagan in reality. A craze for charms of any kind seems to possess them all. Most of them believe in the immortality of the soul, as is proved by the fact that nearly all the tribes talk of their relatives

coming to them and conversing with them in their dreams. The spirits of the dead they believe can aid and protect them. Many of the tribes have no idols. They found their religion on a fear of evil spirits, which are, however, under the control of wizards. Human sacrifices, so very common among the tribes of the west coast, is, with few exceptions, a rare feature in the religious rites of the interior tribes.

It is a favorable element in the future problem of Central Africa that although there are hundreds of tribes with various dialects, yet these dialects are all cognate. Stanley was able to cross the continent by use of the Swahili language, with which he started from the east coast. The question has been suggested, may not this unification of language be a monument of the prevailing power of some great nation of the past, vaguely known as Ethiopia?

Nor is the climate as great a hindrance to work in Central Africa as has been generally thought. There is no reason to doubt the conclusions reached by Stanley as the result of his long observation. In reference to the healthfulness of this region, while admitting that the gorges along the lower Congo are unfavorable to health, he says that the chief source of trouble to Europeans is their want of due care as they meet the new conditions of life in equatorial regions. Fever is caused not so much by malaria as by overheating the body, or by unduly stimulating it with wine, followed by exposure to cold draughts of air. He states that out of 263 Europeans, who, since 1879, have for a longer or shorter period been in the service of the International Association on the Congo, only 24 have died from sickness, and that it is known that several of these deaths were caused by the grossest carelessness.

The work that is being done is not extensive. When Stanley's cry for help for Africa was heard, England and America were aroused. Work began in earnest. The few struggling missions already planted were more vigorously assisted, and some new openings were made. To-day the Universities Mission occupies the field between Zanzibar and Lake Nyassa. The Scotch Established Church has its mission at Blantyre; the Free Church, a very vigorous one at Livingstonia, working northward to Tanganyika from Nyassa, with an eye to the region west of this chain of stations. At Tanganyika they meet the London Missionary Society with a

noble band of workers and a good equipment for those waters. At Rubaga, the chief town of the Waganda, on the Victoria Nyanza, the Church Missionary Society has a flourishing mission and well-tried and capable workmen. All these are at the east. On the west, the American Board has a new mission; and on the Congo, the Livingstone Inland Mission and the English Baptists are doing what they are able to do in carrying the gospel tidings to the mighty nation of which we have been speaking. The ninety men who form these missions are but a handful in the midst of the millions of ignorant heathen. A beginning has been made. For this we are thankful. At the same time we must realize that the force is utterly inadequate to the vast and urgent necessities of the field.

How shall we bring home to our minds the needs of this part of our Lord's inheritance? As we sail up the Congo and its tributaries, an unobstructed journey of nearly 5,000 miles, on either hand are villages, villages, villages! And if we should penetrate into the country back from the rivers, we would still see these teeming villages. These men, with grand physical frames and intelligent minds, and each having in himself the possibility of faithful service for our King, are all living as utterly ignorant of our Lord Jesus Christ as are the beasts about them. Then think of 90 men toiling among 45,000,000 of these benighted ones! Four men to deal with a population as large as that of Ontario! Ethiopia is stretching out her hands to us. God in His providence has graciously opened up the way. Who of us will say, "Lord, here am I; send me?"

ALBERT E. DOHERTY.

CITY MISSIONS.

HOUSE TO HOUSE VISITATION.

At the outset we may expect some to spurn us from their doors: others, again, to receive us as messengers of light. This latter is what the writer has to say of Toronto's poor, with but few exceptions, after laboring among them for several years.

To give our readers the best idea of this work it will be well to take them with us as we go from house to house. In this way

they will learn what kind of reception is given and what the inmates and interiors of these houses are like.

Let us call at house No. 1.

We rap. A woman comes to the door. We state the object of our visit. She replies: "Ah! we have no time to see you to-day." "Well, then, we will call another time; but do you go to any church?" "No; we never have any time to go to church."

A few days afterwards we again call. Her husband, a hardened-looking man, is at home. We state the object of our visit. He replies: "I don't want to hear any of your talk." "But Mr —, the Lord Jesus commands us to 'go, preach the gospel to every creature.' You are one of the creatures, therefore we must come to speak to you." With this he springs up, takes us by the shoulders, and pushes us out of his house, saying: "I don't want to have any dealings with you religious men." Just here, we must confess that such treatment is humbling.

We will now call at house No. 2.

The mistress of the place comes to the door. We state the object of our visit. She sharply replies: "I don't want you to come about here. I can go to church or stay at home, which I please, and it's nobody's business." "Not so, madam. The Lord differs from you. He does not say: 'Let the people alone.' But He says: 'Go out into the streets and lanes of the city and bid them come.' In fact, He is even more emphatic in His command, and says: "Go out into the highways and hedges and *compel* them to come in that my house may be full.' From this you see we dare not pass you without telling what the Lord wants you to do."

"Oh! I don't want any of your telling. One of the women workers from your mission came to my place some weeks ago, saying she was hunting up the lost ones. The idea! As if we were the drunks and scum of the city! No, indeed! We are respectable folk about here."

"But, madam, it is not fair to condemn us because another person has been a little injudicious."

"I don't condemn you, but I don't want to spend time talking with you, for I know far more about the gospel than you do."

"That may be quite true. We confess that as yet we know but little about Prince Immanuel. We crave to know more; so

since you have that greater knowledge of Him, permit us to come in and learn from you."

"Oh! I can get on just as well without talking on these things."

"Some differ from you here, also. They hold that it does us much good to converse with each other upon Divine things. Have you ever read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*?"

"Yes; many a time."

"Then you will recollect that as Christian and Hopeful were crossing a certain piece of country, Hopeful said: 'Brother Christian, I am getting very drowsy. I feel as if I must lie down and take a nap.' 'Beware,' says Christian, 'I perceive this is "Enchanted Ground." It will be death to sleep here. Come, good Brother Hopeful, let us talk of the Lord's goodness to us since we entered upon this way, and of the fine city, whither we are bound, lest we fall asleep and lose our souls in this dangerous place.' So they did, and got safely over 'Enchanted Ground.'

"This earth is our 'Enchanted Ground.' So the good Master sent us along to-day to have a little talk with you lest you get sleepy and lose your soul by the way."

Her frowns at this gave way to smiles. We now have admission to her home with the messages of our King.

We call at house No. 3.

It is a narrow lane. This district may be called the slums. We are warned not to enter in here. Say the neighbors: "They are terrible people. They drink. They fight. Roughts gather there. It is a perfect bedlam. It is not safe to go in." But we reply, "that we call at every house, so cannot pass this one." We call. Are politely received. Have a plain, pointed talk with the repulsive-looking inmates. They are attentive, and promise to come to the mission. We are requested to call for young Johnnie on Sabbath to take him to Sabbath School. On Sabbath we call. The mother is drunk. The boy is unready. Next Sabbath we again call for him. He is unready. The mother says: "I would like to send him; but you see those pants on him. That is all he's got." Indeed, the pants were a sorry pair. So ragged they would hardly hang together. The husband says: "Wife, send him anyway." She took him aside into a room to get him ready, while we sit pondering over how we are to take that boy through

the crowded streets in such pants. In a little time the mother brought him out. He had on an old overcoat that reached down to his heels. He didn't look so bad, but the coat was a little out of season, as it was a hot Sunday in summer. We get him to Sabbath School; we also get his little sister Millie some weeks afterwards. Summer passes, winter comes, but we see no improvement in this home, though we are always civilly received.

It is now a cold Sabbath afternoon when we turn into this lane. We catch sight of little Millie. There she stands. On her head is a straw hat minus its rim. A tattered print dress covers her. For mits she wears a man's leather glove on one hand and an old sock on the other. Her toes peep through her shoes. We address her: "Well, Millie, why are you not at Sabbath School to-day?"

"Me have got no clothes."

"What has happened them?"

"Ma put them in the pawn shop."

"Where is your ma now?"

"She is in gaol, and the little baby is there, too."

"Where is your pa?"

"He's in gaol."

"How did they get there?"

"These cobs (policemen) came one night and took them all away."

"With whom, then, do you stay?"

"Me stays with me grandpa and grandma."

We go with her to this haunt of sin and misery. It is stripped of everything with the exception of one little room in which the old couple and Millie live. They are about seventy years old. It has been seventy years of sinning with them.

We visit this wretched mother in the gaol. She is not at all displeased with the change of residence, but even goes so far as to express a wish that the whole family was there, since there is such good board and warm rooms. Time passes. They are released. We sometimes get them to our mission services. Sin yet abounds in their home. This poor woman sometimes struggles hard against her besetting sins, and then falls, it seems, lower than before. We have no thought of giving them up. With God all things are possible. This is a sample of many houses visited by the writer.

We call at house No. 4.

Here a poor widow resides. Several little children must be left to care for themselves, as day by day she goes to work. In answer to a question which we put she says she is not a Christian. "Indeed, I cannot be one, for I am compelled to work on Sundays. I wash and scrub all week to pay rent and provide food and clothes for my children, and then have to do my own work on Sundays. I am not happy; I am not doing right; but it seems I can't help it."

We tell her of Him who comes to save.

"Do you mean to tell me," says she, "that God will receive a poor sinner just as she is?"

This she said with deep emotion. We tell her it is God Himself who says so.

"But He surely don't mean that I should come just now, for I am a great sinner?"

We reply that God says "now is the accepted time, that now is the day of salvation."

"But I have bad habits." (She appeared as if she drank.) "Must I not wait till I break myself from these?"

We reply: "If you tarry till you're better you will never come at all. You must come just as you are." As we reasoned on this line she seemed to receive light and gave herself to the Master.

"Now, we will tell you what to do about your work. Do as much as you can, yet be sure to leave enough time on Saturday to get your own work done up, then trust God for the rest and keep the Sabbath."

She said she would. She was at the mission service on the Sunday evening.

We see her next week. The sadness has left her face; in its place we see joy.

"Well, how did you get on?"

"I did as you advised," said she, "and got just as much money, and so we have lacked nothing."

She then tells how different she feels since she trusts God.

"The Bible has become a new book to me. I used to regard it no more than an old newspaper. Now I can't open it at any part but I find something to cheer and help me."

This woman has now for many months been a member of one of our city churches.

We find many like this poor woman burdened with sin and longing for deliverance. Yet they must remain so unless some of God's servants go to them. True, there are many churches, but these poor ones are down in the world and think they are not wanted in these "grand places." It is little use arguing with them on this score until the grace of God begins to control. Though poor, they possess that independence native to mankind, and scorn to accept that benefit for which they cannot return a fair equivalent.

We call at house No. 5.

In this house there live two widow sisters with their little children. One of the women is an invalid. Her affliction is incurable. It gives constant and sometimes intense pain. We are surprised at her bright and cheerful face, but soon learn the secret. She trusts the Master and submits to His will. She may live for many years. Still we hear no word of complaint because of the sadness of her fate. She praises God for His unfailing kindness to her.

"Think of His love to me," said she, "in saving my soul, while many are permitted to live slaves to sin."

She tells of how they have managed to make both ends meet :

"Some time since my sister did not get much to do, so we felt it greatly in our home. Often we had only two meals of dry bread a day, and sometimes only one, still we never could help but thank God even for this. Once when the landlord sent in his rent bill we lacked \$5 of the amount. We could do nothing else but take it to the Lord. We prayed about it three times that day. Next morning the postman brought us a letter. On opening it we found \$5 from a friend, who said he thought we might find a use for this sum. At another time I had need of \$2. I prayed for it, and on the following morning a letter came containing \$2. There was no name attached, but on a little slip of paper was the text : ' Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him ' (Ps. ciii., 13). Thus you see the Lord never fails us."

We hear from a friend of hers that one fine day about a year ago she was tempted to complain. It was a holiday. The other members of the family had gone to the park. People in holiday attire passed joyously along the street, while she sat looking out

into the sunshine. As she mused upon how she was cut off from all this enjoyment, she said :—

“ Why does God treat me so? Surely I have been no worse than many of those to whom He has given the best of health.”

Just then a blind man passed before her window, a little boy leading him by the hand.

“ Oh, how much better off am I than that poor man! God has given me good eyesight so that I can read His blessed Book.”

Since then she has never been heard to complain.

J. GOFORTH.

THE WORK IN DEMERARA.

THE following is an extract from a letter just received by one of our students from Rev. John Gibson, missionary to Demerara :—

“ You wish to know our difficulties, ‘ the dark side as well as the bright.’ The fact is, there is darkness on every side, with only enough of light to reveal the darkness. Even with regard to the heathen who have the fewest privileges, one cannot help feeling that the difference between what they *might be* and what they really *are*, is too painfully great. One of the difficulties we have to meet is the proneness of both old and young to take the Sabbath for a day of amusement. There is a band of lawless coolie boys, who occasionally come within reach of our teaching, but who have promised to be more regular in their attendance in the future. It is no unusual thing to see boys playing ball and other games on Sunday, and this is the favorite day for feasts and social gatherings among the coolies. Scarcely a Sabbath passes without some feast to keep the people from attending our services. The means of amusement are so abundant and so prominent, that many slightly interested in the truth are drawn away. Others spend their time in doing their own work on Sunday, in order that they may be free to work on the estates during the week. These are greedy of gain, and in their anxiety to amass wealth to carry back to their native land, they neglect the word ‘ more precious than gold.’

“ A suspicious gathering frequently seen near the back doors of the rum shops, indicates that there is in this direction too, a counter

attraction to all that is good. The shillings that have been earned by hard work during the week, are frequently all spent before Monday morning. On one estate the Mussulmans meet regularly at four o'clock. We are allowed to hold a service at the door of the temple from three to four o'clock. The Mussulmans are much more intelligent than the Hindoo. Their faith is more deeply rooted and more firmly fixed; our teaching sometimes excites anger and opposition. The Hindoos are inclined to listen, to assent, to promise, and do no more, except perhaps to beg a little money or some such favor. A day of sacred rest is a thing unknown to the majority of the coolies. Is it not, then, 'a good thing and pleasant,' to see even a few of those born in heathen darkness, assemble regularly for the worship of the one living and true God? The first man that I baptized has not been absent one Sabbath since the day of his baptism, in the beginning of September. The test has not been long, but the result in this case and in some others, is encouraging. If you saw our work for yourself you might not think it worth writing about; if you saw our field you would certainly think it well worth working."

OUR MISSION FIELDS—MUSKOKA.

MUSKOKA lies east of Parry Sound District, and is about one hundred miles in length and forty in breadth. The land in this part of the country is good, but so much broken up by rock and lake that the settlements are small and often far apart. The scenery is picturesque, and many tourists find their way to the lovely islands in these quiet, clear, inland lakes. Boating, fishing and hunting, furnish abundant and health-giving pastime to the visitor wearied with the business, dust, and din of city life. Others besides the pleasure and health seekers may be found in these northern parts of Ontario. Each summer for the last thirteen years has seen from two to six missionaries, from our Society, travelling through this district, visiting from house to house, and gathering the people together for Sabbath services, exercises which give highest pleasure, and often promote physical health and mental vigor.

Four fields were occupied by our students last summer :—

1. *Morrison* or Sparrow Lake, seven miles south of Gravenhurst, where there are about 50 families, mostly of German nationality. This field was taken up for the first time this summer and in spite of many obstacles, the work was of an encouraging character.

2. *Bethune* and *McConkey*, sixty miles north of Gravenhurst, was also a new field, being visited for the first time this summer. The missionary preached at six different places and had in all an average Sabbath attendance of about one hundred.

These new fields give excellent scope for the organizing ingenuity of the student and put sometimes to a severe test his tact, perseverance, and common sense.

3. *Port Carling* is somewhat of a *watering-place*, being the summer resort of many tourists from Ontario. It is situated on the short canal and river between lakes Rosseau and Muskoka.

It has three saw-mills, three stores, and three large summer boarding houses, also three churches. The Presbyterian church is a neat frame building. The average Sabbath attendance was about sixty.

4. *Baysville*, situated some twenty miles from Bracebridge, on the Lake of Bays, has three preaching places which give an average Sabbath attendance of over two hundred.

This field has been under the care of the Society for a number of years and the cause has progressed so favorably that a handsome church was finished this summer through the self-sacrificing labors of our missionary, who not only solicited and secured aid from friends in Toronto, but also gave his entire summer's salary to the field.

This surely was zeal in a good cause, evincing the spirit of readiness to spend and be spent in the cause of Christianity.

Correspondence.

BIBLE STUDY.

To the Editors of the Knox College Monthly.

THIS matter of Bible study, I am glad to see, is still being agitated by yourselves and others. Let us continue the agitation till there is reform in ourselves, and redress in the provisions for our help. For I am strongly of opinion that a great fault lies in ourselves, as well as possibly in the powers that be.

The fact to be deplored is, ignorance of the Bible as the Word of God. We are to a large extent ignorant of the texts or passages which illustrate the truth, or suit the case of particular individuals in particular difficulties. We have no right to expect that the Holy Spirit will make up for our sinful neglect of the talents given us. But some put their trust in concordances or Scripture text-books. They forget that many texts and passages illustrate others, although not one of the important words occurs in both passages. And, further, a concordance is not always at hand; nor, if it were, could it be used, *e.g.*, in the enquiry room, with the anxious anywhere, especially by the wayside. What we most require is, I conceive, the ability to put our finger, on the shortest notice, on the text or passage required.

I do not, therefore, think that the fact to be specially deplored is our ignorance of the literary style of the several books. The style of an author is not to be got in a translation. The chief thing for us here is, so to give ourselves to the language of the Bible of 1611 that our profiting may appear to all in the purity and clearness of our style; just as John Bunyan so lived in the words of that Bible, that he wrote a book as deserving as it to be called a well of English undefiled.

Four reasons for the fact to be deplored may be given. (1) A natural tendency to prefer other reading, *e.g.*, religious newspapers and books to the practical exclusion of Bible study, not to say reading. There is something here back of laziness. (2) The importance of this work has not been duly enforced on us. We have been used to the isolated text, and in our earlier days to the Lesson Leaf. (3) Lack of the direct help of a skilled Bible instructor in the College. (4) Slackness in individual and systematic study.

Relief may come along these four lines. (1) We must resolve that nothing, however alluring, shall entice us from the solid meat of the Word. Let the reading room no longer witness to frittered moments. If we cannot otherwise find time for Bible study, let all the newspapers go. As for the religious books, an electric light or even a rush-light is a good thing, but we cannot get along without the sun. (2) The way of relief is obvious here. (3) I do not think that much good would be done by saddling our new professor with this Bible work. The Assembly meditates enough for him already. But, further, his fitness for this could not be assured under the conditions of the case. Besides, at best, only a few lectures could be given—let us suppose on the literary style of the books.

If that were all, we would know nothing more about it than the man who has learned about the style of Shakespeare from a book on English literature. Nothing can make up for individual labor. Mere lectures cannot suffice. Could we get a city pastor who, without further expenditure of his time than the hour, could teach us how to study and give us the impulse to study?

Only individual—and above all, systematic—study can cure this ignorance. I fear if we had, say one lecture a week on the English Bible, it would speedily be in the same category as the other lectures. And, after all, considering the hundreds of aids to Bible study teeming around us, as matters *now* are, we are inexcusable.

Yours, etc.,
D. MCGILLIVRAY.

Editorial.

Is Knox to Have a New Professor?

A NUMBER of presbyteries have by this time considered the matter of the appointment of a new professor in Knox College. Quite a large proportion of these presbyteries, instead of nominating a man for the position, as the Assembly requested, have signified their disapproval of the whole scheme, and have indicated their preference for a system of lectureships. It is alleged (1) that the finances of the Church will not permit the establishment of an additional professorship; (2) that, at all events, the matter should be held in abeyance till the question of the union of the colleges is settled; (3) that the interests of the students will be best served by the lectureship system. The first of these points, of course, demands fair and careful consideration; the second may be admitted with the proviso that the unsettled period be not greatly prolonged; from the third we totally and emphatically dissent. There are many subjects in which a course of lectures by some practical, earnest man would be a desirable and helpful thing—one of these we indicated in our last number—but in the great essential subjects of a theological curriculum more than this is needed. It is impossible that any man should do justice to these vast departments of study in a course of lectures which will extend over some eight or ten weeks at most, and which will be prepared and delivered possibly in the midst of the labor of a settled charge. Such subjects demand undivided and life-long attention.

When a professor has been secured in Homiletics and Church History, we will be glad to have as many lectureships as can be afforded; but with fifty students in Theology and a thorough and varied course of study, four professors is surely the smallest number with which we ought to be content. In the discussion of the question of lecturer vs. professor, it should be remembered that what is gained by a student from the everyday contact with a great and good man is as important as the instruction

imbibed from books or lectures. But the inspiration which comes from such intercourse cannot be secured to any great degree in the lectures of a few weeks.

The body of students, then, we venture to think, will not be satisfied with anything else than the establishment of this professorship. If an approaching college union is going to bring the right man, well and good; but if the finances of the Church will at all afford the outlay, we ought to have the new professor whether college union comes or not.

The Method of Appointing a Professor.

WHILE this subject of a new professor has been eliciting discussion, has the question occurred to any one whether a more cumbrous and less practical method of appointing a professor than that in vogue in our Church could be suggested? The best available professor is not certain to be, in fact is not apt to be, the most popular preacher in the Church, or the most influential man in the Assembly. He may be some modest, scholarly man in a comparatively retired sphere. But we cannot conceive how the members of the Presbytery of Miramichi or of Rock Lake are to discover and nominate such a one if he chance to live in the Presbytery of Saugeen.

Might not a nominating committee be appointed, having among its members some men whose position would give them a wide acquaintance with the ministers of the Church and others having an immediate interest in the welfare of the College and the cause of education? Such a committee, whose express business it should be to investigate, confer, and try to discover the best available man, would be less likely to be influenced by personal or sentimental considerations than the presbyteries, and would in every way be in a better position to make intelligent nominations. Its power could be limited by requiring that the result of its labors should be submitted to the presbyteries or to the Assembly.

A Cambridge Visitor.

MR. J. E. K. STUDD, a graduate of Cambridge, is at present engaged in making a tour through many of the College Young Men's Christian Associations in America. For athletics, scholarship and Christian manliness, his name is still well remembered within the walls of his *alma mater*. At the evangelistic meetings held by Mr. Moody in that University some years ago, Mr. Studd was selected to occupy a position on the platform with the great evangelist, as the one out of 3,000 students who pre-eminently commanded the respect of all classes of students and who would be most likely by his presence on the platform, to gain an attentive hearing for the speakers. He was not only an eye-witness of the marvellous work accomplished during that series of meetings, but he also became well acquainted with the subsequent unparalleled missionary movement among college men connected with the departure of some Cambridge graduates (among whom was his own brother) to the inland mission fields of China.

Mr. Studd thoroughly understands college life in all its phases. His familiarity with the many incidents of Christian work in English colleges, and his broad sympathy with everything that is manly in college life, gain for him the deep attention and profound respect of the students everywhere, and these advantages he is not slow to improve. Before returning to his work in London, he proposes to devote a portion of February to a visitation of some Canadian colleges from Halifax to Toronto. We feel sure his visit to the flourishing Y. M. C. A. of our neighboring University will be gratifying to the members, who can point with satisfaction and pride to a building newly erected by their Association.

In his tour Mr. Studd will be accompanied by the International College Secretary—Mr. L. D. Wishard—one who is no stranger to our associations. We see great good in this contemplated visit which cannot fail to quicken the zeal and methodize the work of such valuable Christian agencies as our College Associations have proved themselves to be.

Post-Graduate Mission Work.

THE letters which have appeared on this subject in our columns have been sufficient to make it very clear that the Assembly's regulation requiring six months' mission work from graduates is a most useless measure, failing, as it does, utterly to solve the difficulty of winter supply.

These letters also seem to evidence a somewhat strong feeling against any such period of work being prescribed by law of the Assembly as a pre-requisite for ordination. It is thought that a *recommendation* to this effect, accompanied by a clear exhibition of the needs of the fields, would be sufficient.

With this, however, we are not inclined to agree. While the present demand for missionaries continues, we would be strongly in favor of a regulation which would require, from all graduates, mission work for at least twelve months before settlement. The needs of the fields are most pressing. They cannot be stated too strongly. No other practical scheme for continuous supply has been suggested. It is necessary that the matter should take the form of law in order that supply may be certain, and that those who, of their own accord, would be willing to undertake the work, may not be placed at a disadvantage as regards settlement compared with others whose only aim might be to obtain an easy charge as speedily as possible. If the regulation should have the effect of keeping some such men out of the ministry no harm would be done.

Of course, exceptional cases might occur in which, on application, the requirement could be remitted.

The Revised Bible.

A LITTLE more than seven months ago the Revised Bible was given to the public. Perhaps no work was ever awaited with such eager interest, nor was any subjected to such close and severe examination during its period of probation. The great majority of its readers have patiently waited during

this period. They had preferences for old texts and familiar forms of expression, and perhaps instinctively turned to these in times of perplexity or trouble, but the new were under examination, and decision was reserved in expectation of the result. For, after all, the degree of acceptance accorded to this great work, by the general reader, depends very largely upon the estimation put upon it by the few competent to judge of the work of the Revisers. If the verdict of these be favorable, the acceptance of the general body of Christians will follow.

These men are now expressing themselves, and, in most instances, favorably. A recent article in this connection appears in the January number of the *Presbyterian Review*, '86, from the pen of the Rev. Prin. Caven. The writer's reputation as an exegete will obtain for him a careful reading everywhere, but by those who have come under his influence while pursuing their theological studies, and who almost unconsciously yield to his fair and clear judgment, this article will be read with intensest interest.

The question the writer discusses is—"Does the Revised Version accomplish all that can be reasonably expected of a version executed at the present time?" In reference to what has been done for the text of the New Testament the answer is given in the affirmative. While open to criticism at some points, yet—"in textual revision everything has been done that could reasonably be expected"—and—"the results of the criticism of the last hundred years are faithfully represented in the text which underlies the revision."

But in regard to the text of the Old Testament regret is expressed that a more thorough revision of the Hebrew was not attempted. It is acknowledged that the materials were not immediately available for a thorough revision of the Hebrew text, but it is submitted that something more than has been done might in safety, and should in consistency, have been done.

Respecting the work of amending the translation of the New Testament, the opinion is expressed that "we should expect any competent judge to say that the work is well and thoroughly done." The work of translating the Old Testament text is treated at greater length, but the verdict is one of approval. In the removal of archaisms, in the emendation of the translation, in the more correct rendering of the grammatical forms, a decided advance is noted.

The English of the Authorized Bible has always been a subject of praise among literary men. This has not been impaired by the work of revision. It is not asserted that it is improved, but neither has it suffered. And, in regard to theological and ethical results, it is seen that,—“no reconstruction of theology is necessary, and the moral characteristics of the Bible are precisely what they were.”

In a sentence or two at the close we have the writer's position in regard to the question discussed:—"No service rendered to the Bible since 1611 can be regarded as transcending in importance the work of revision now completed. . . . The work is not perfect, but the Revised Version will certainly be placed at the head of all translations of the Scripture which have yet been made."

Dr. Patton on the Metaphysics of Oughtness.

DR. FRANCIS L. PATTON contributes to the current number of the *Presbyterian Review* an article on "The Metaphysics of Oughtness." We shall try to give a bare, but, we hope, not inaccurate outline of this paper.

Dr. Patton contends at the outset that experiential philosophers have failed in their attempts to derive the idea of oughtness from simpler elements. This idea is an ultimate psychological fact. The fact has a metaphysical aspect. By this is meant that the idea of oughtness is found among the *a priori* elements of knowledge. Like the ideas of Space, Time, Cause, Substance and Personal Identity, the idea of moral obligation is not derived from, but is one of the conditions that render experience possible. If the idea of oughtness is an *a priori* belief its consideration belongs to Metaphysic and not to Psychology. For this latter is an empirical science. Besides these *a priori* elements of knowledge, Metaphysic includes Ontology, the science of Being. There are included in Metaphysic (1) an explanation of *a priori* elements of knowledge; (2) a theory of the universe. Since these are included in the same science, any explanation of the idea of moral obligation must give an account of its relation to theories of the universe. Of these theories the chief are: (1) the Materialistic; (2) the Pantheistic; (3) the Theistic. If either of the first two theories be accepted, then Freedom of the Will is destroyed and the idea of moral obligation vanishes. The third theory alone correctly interprets oughtness. And the idea of oughtness corroborates the Theistic theory. The moral argument to the Divine existence is, in our author's opinion, altered but not destroyed by the assumption of the truth of the evolution theory. Even if that theory were true, "there is a teleology in human history and in the upward movements of the human spirit that finds no adequate explanation except through the hypothesis of an infinite God." Turning to seek an interpretation of the idea of oughtness, Dr. Patton objects to Kant's interpretation: (1) that it in the end lands us in Utilitarianism of the Benthamic type; (2) that Kant in making the autonomy of the will, "the sole principle of all moral laws and of all duties which conform to them," leaves no room for a moral standard of universal authority. After all, in following Kant's lead, we are brought to the choice of one of the alternatives: (1) the abandonment of *a priori* morality. (2) deference to an external will. Since empiricism does not account for the idea of oughtness as it exists, the latter of these alternatives must be chosen as the true interpretation of moral obligation.

Those who heard Dr. Patton's lecture on "The History of Theistic Beliefs" scarcely need to be told of the clearness and virility of his style. In the article in the *Review* there is not a single obscure or superfluous sentence. We cannot do better than advise our readers to peruse with attention this paper, expressing as it does the views of an acute and independent thinker on a most important subject.

Here and Away.

“THE same to you!”

LECTURES were resumed on Wednesday, January 6.

JOSEPH BUILDER '83, missionary, Mhow, Central India, who was seriously ill some time ago, is, we are thankful to say, much improved.

R. G. SINCLAIR, '82, late of Prince Albert, N. W. T., is soon to be settled at Mount Pleasant and Burford.

R. M. HAMILTON, after an absence of two years, is with us again. He continues his university course, taking up the work of the third year.

WE have recently been visited by six members of the class of '85 — James Malcolm, of Underwood; A. Blair, of Nassagaweya; R. McNair, of Durham; J. M. Gardiner; H. C. Howard; and D. McColl.

W. P. MACKENZIE has joined the class of '88. Since he finished his Arts course in '84 he has been doing mission work at Fort Macleod, N. W. T. When he left there a few weeks ago things were in a very unsettled condition, and another Indian outbreak among the probabilities. He reports the state of religion along the line of the C. P. R. as simply appalling.

REV. DR. McCURDY has entered on his duties as Assistant Lecturer in Oriental Languages in University College. His appointment is likely to give great satisfaction. His eminent abilities as an Oriental scholar, and his long experience as a teacher, will invest the study of these languages with more interest and make it less of a drudgery than it has been. We shall expect our successors to know a good deal more about Hebrew than we did when we entered Theology.

THE authorities of Cornell have succeeded in securing one of the brightest lights among Canadian University men. The Chair of Mental and Moral Science in that institution has been proffered to and accepted by Prof. J. G. Schurman of Dalhousie University, Halifax. Dr. Schurman, although yet a young man, is one of the foremost metaphysicians of the day. It is to be regretted that so many of our distinguished Canadians are thus lost to Canada.

WE are always glad to record notices such as the following:—

“On Thursday, December 24, at the residence of the bride's father, Innerkip, by the Rev. Wm. McKinley, the Rev. A. Blair, B.A., of Nassagaweya, to Miss Annie Hastings.”

“At Chalmers' Church, Woodstock, on Wednesday, 30th December, Rev. W. S. McTavish, of St. George, to Maggie Jane, second daughter of the Rev. W. A. MacKay, B.A., of Woodstock.”

“At Stratford, on Tuesday, January 12, by the Rev. Thomas MacPherson, the Rev. James Ballantyne, B.A., pastor of Knox Church, London South, to Florence, third daughter of the Hon. Chas. Clarke, Speaker of the House of Assembly.”

THE fourth public meeting of the Students' Missionary Society took place on Friday evening, the 15th inst. Robert Kilgour, Esq., occupied the chair. The president of the Society, Mr. Wm. Farquharson, gave an address on "Missionary Zeal in Colleges: How to Foster it." A report of mission work in South Manitoba was read by C. W. Gordon, and a paper on "China," by J. Goforth. Rev. R. P. MacKay, M.A., of Parkdale, gave a stirring address. These public meetings are usually well attended and have been the means of creating much interest in the extensive work done by the Society.

THE old story about the dreaded "spare-room" is going the rounds again. It has been told over and over again by almost every student who has filled appointments during the winter months. We do not doubt the hospitality of the friends who lodge "the minister" in "the best room," which is never used but on rare occasions. Their hospitality is sincere, but mistaken, and decidedly chilling. To suppose that because a man is a minister he can find comfort in a damp room, cold and clammy, haunted by the ghosts of his frozen predecessors, is a great mistake. It is often said that before a student has finished his theological course he is more fit for the hospital than for the pulpit. In some cases this is true, and true because he has spent too many nights in "the spare-room." The very thought of some of them is enough to make one shiver.

VACATION seems to have been pretty generally enjoyed by the students. The four or five gentlemen who remained in the college say they had "a quiet time." Few songs were sung, few noises were made, few practical jokes played. Those who went away have all returned hale and hearty, giving interesting accounts of their varied experiences. Some talk about the bad roads and small congregations. Some ring the changes on "turkey, cranberry sauce and plum-pudding." The experience of some includes the inevitable Christmas entertainment with the inevitable tea-meeting speech. The memories of some go back to the New Year's calls with the coffee and cake—and subsequent dyspepsia. Then there are others who say little but think much about their Christmas experiences. "Tommy Traddles" still has "the best girl in the world."

AT the last ordinary meeting of the Literary Society, an animated discussion arose on the question of Post-graduate Mission-work. It became evident that the majority of the students are strongly in favor of such mission work. The Assembly's law as it now stands receives little support, because it seems perfectly plain that "six months' mission work" would, in most cases, be a disadvantage to the graduate and not much benefit to the field. But let the time be made twelve months instead of six, and we feel sure the students of Knox College will be the last to disapprove or protest. Our experience in the many mission fields of the Church, our personal knowledge of the pressing needs of these fields—all the more pressing that ignorant, conceited, fanatical proselytisers are making sad havoc not only of Presbyterianism, but also of true religion—has convinced us that if our Church is to hold her own, not simply against other churches, but against worldliness, irreligion and vice, far more must be done than has yet been attempted. The younger men must go to the front.

BUSINESS NOTICE.

We are sorry that through some oversight in mailing, a number of our subscribers did not receive the December MONTHLY. We shall be pleased if all such will let us know, so that the mistake may be rectified.

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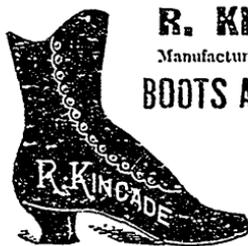
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