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SABBATH SCHOOL PAPERS.

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Notes of the Week.

THERE are fewer daily papers in London now than there were a generation ago, says the *Philadelphia Times*, and it is the same process of the extinction of the weakest that seems to be going on in New York. But the great London dailies have made themselves strong, not by cheap prices, but by good work. The mistake that has been made in this country in the active competition among the too numerous newspapers, is in trying to give the papers away, instead of making them so good that the public will be glad to buy them.

To all appearance the London police authorities are gradually but surely fastening the toils around the miserable and misguided men who caused the recent explosion at the Tower. Evidence sufficient to prove that Cunningham and Burton were implicated in the dastardly piece of work that wrought such havoc and consternation among London Saturday afternoon sight-seers has already been made public. For prudential reasons, it is probable there is more convincing evidence held in reserve till the proper time comes. The public desire is that if possible every person, male or female, implicated in this barbarous outrage should be got hold of, and the just punishment their crime deserves meted out to them.

THE somewhat complicated nature of the questions discussed at the Congo Conference at Berlin seemed in a fair way of adjustment when a new difficulty emerged. Portugal, unable to get the Conference to assent to her territorial claims on the banks of the Congo as against those of the International Association, has taken forcible possession, pleading right of discovery. The obstacle thus interposed to prevent an harmonious settlement of these West African complications will no doubt be speedily removed without Portugal incurring the expense of putting her army and navy on a war footing. Diplomacy will no doubt be equal to the task of disentangling the unexpected difficulty occasioned by the sharp practice of Portugal.

ANOTHER genuine hermit has been discovered in the Temple in London, and an inquest has been held upon his remains by the city coroner. This old gentleman's name was Oliver. He was a barrister who for many years abandoned practice, or had been abandoned by it, and he was seventy-four years of age. He was found dying on his hearth-rug, and the doctor, who was summoned too late to render any aid, says that the unfortunate man was in a very neglected condition and much emaciated. There are, says the *St. James' Gazette*, a number of these hermits in the inns of Court and Chancery. They are usually barristers who have failed, but who haunt the place like living ghosts, and exist in the most extreme squalor. Not a few of them are men of ability, who, with more help in early life, might have done great things.

WHILE the Council of the Dominion Alliance was in session at Ottawa last week, the Women's Christian Temperance Union assembled in the same city. They have resolved to petition the Dominion Parliament against any alterations in the Scott Act, except in the direction of prohibition. A great public meeting was held at which Senator Vidal presided, and addresses were delivered by him and by Mrs. Youmans, Mrs. Bueil, President of the New York Union, Mrs. Middleton, President Quebec Union, J. R. Dougall, of Mon-

treil, and Noah Shakespeare, M.P., Victoria, B.C. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year—President, Mrs. Youmans, Picton; corresponding secretary, Mrs. Dalkin, Quebec; recording secretary, Miss Orchard, Galt; treasurer, Mrs. Turnbull, St. John, N.B.

A VERY important decision was rendered in the Superior Court, Montreal, recently. The plaintiff, the wife of a man named Desjardins, took action against the defendant, a tavern-keeper, for damages, on the ground that he had sold liquor to her husband, who was a drunkard, after she had given notice to him not to do so, under the 95th and following sections of the Quebec License Law of 1878, which gives this action to the wife of "any person who has the habit of drinking liquor to excess," the law providing that she is to give notice to the public "not to sell or deliver liquor to the person having such habit." The judge held that it had been proved that the woman's husband was an habitual drunkard, and that the tavern-keeper knew him to be such when he sold him the liquor, and awarded the plaintiff the full amount of damages claimed, \$200.

LATE advices from Formosa state that the French contemplate raising the blockade. It has been maintained with difficulty, and as a piece of strategy has been ineffective. Rumor has it that there is a mutinous spirit among the Franco-Algerine troops at Kelung. It is thought that the transference of the blockade from Formosa to the Canton River will be more severely felt by the Chinese, and this, it has been hinted, is the present intention. Should this change be made, Dr. Mackay will have the opportunity to reach Tamsui, gather his scattered flock together, and resume the active work to which he is so thoroughly devoted. The injury done to his work in Formosa by French interruption will be felt for a long time. He, however, is not the man to be daunted by difficulty.

THE desire of Germany to develop a colonial policy on a large scale has made other nations, especially Great Britain, keenly suspicious of German movements abroad. It may be that the accounts received of German doings on the Cameroons river are heightened in their colouring by the existence in the British mind of this jealous feeling. It is however possible, that the Germans proceeded in a very high-handed arbitrary way to inflict punishment on the natives who resented interference with their rights. The scant courtesy shown British residents, missionaries and others is calculated to exasperate those who were accidental victims of German vindictiveness. German officials are not always chosen for their considerateness and delicacy of feeling. These and similar occurrences may be irritating but it would not be easy to excite a perilous misunderstanding between Great Britain and Germany.

THE peaceful little village of Thornhill was the scene of a sad tragedy last week. Two strangers, burglars evidently, visited the village and spent their time in hanging about the bar-rooms and making tours of observation. A young man, named Arnold, and an acquaintance got into conversation with the strangers, then there was drinking and gambling, when quarrelling followed. This led to a rough-and-tumble fight, which ended in the production of the ever-ready revolver, and the shooting of Arnold. The quarrelsome strangers took to flight but were pursued by indignant villagers, who overtook them and made them prisoners. They were handed over to the authorities who had them safely lodged in Toronto gaol. The unfortunate young man who was shot lingered for a few hours when he expired. The bar-room encourages drinking, liquor makes men quarrelsome, and the odious practice of carrying revolvers furnishes the fool with the weapon to commit murder.

THE deputation that waited on the Attorney-General a few days ago to urge the consideration of the tax exemption question by the Ontario Government,

did not receive very great encouragement. The want of a well-defined plan probably accounts for the indifferent success with which they met. One thing at all events is clear that the principle of tax exemption is invidious and unjust. Mr. Mowat admitted that he would not stand in the way of a considerable reduction in the number of exemptions. The question will require careful consideration. A satisfactory solution may not be very speedily arrived at, as it is only in the large cities where the burden is found to be most grievous. The country is apathetic, though in some cases a mistaken fear is entertained that the rural taxpayer would have to meet increased assessments. The overwhelming vote recently cast in Toronto against the continuance of tax exemptions, may possibly, as is asserted, show that there is confusion as to the precise exemptions sought to be removed, but it is an unmistakably clear indication that the citizens are convinced that the principle of almost indiscriminate exemption is wrong.

THE Council of the Dominion Prohibitory Alliance met at Ottawa last week. A number of prominent temperance men were present, several of them members of the Dominion Parliament. The subjects discussed were mostly of a practical kind. The Secretary reported that there were in 1884 thirteen contests besides that in Halton. The Scott Act was carried in ten out of the thirteen, the smallest majority being 602 while the largest adverse majority was 194. The aggregate vote in the fourteen counties was 43,955 for the Act, and 32,967 against. The report of the Nova Scotia branch stated that the Act was adopted in twelve out of eighteen counties by a total majority of 12,000. Mr. J. J. Maclaren, Q.C. made a number of sensible remarks on the enforcement of the provisions of the Scott Act in the counties where it is in operation. Various suggestions were made showing how the Act could be made effective wherever it was enforced. This is of the utmost importance. Nothing but the apathy of its friends prevents it from accomplishing all that can reasonably be expected of it. The druggists who dispense liquor with prodigality for medicinal purposes received the interested attention of several who took part in the discussions.

THE annual meeting of the Prisoners' Aid Association of Canada was held in the Mission Hall, College Avenue, Toronto, last week. Among those who took part in the proceedings were Rev. Messrs. H. M. Parsons, Dyson Hague and John Sampson; Messrs. S. H. Blake, William H. Howland, Hanilton Cassels, Massie, Harvie, Mrs. Harvie, Dr. Rosebrugh, and the secretary, Mr. S. E. Roberts. This eminently Christian and humane institution is doing an admirable work. Its usefulness is increasing every year, though its resources are ridiculously inadequate. From the report presented at the meeting it is estimated that the amount of aid given to discharged prisoners since 1879 was as follows: 1879-80, eighteen months, \$102; 1881, twelve months, \$156; 1882, twelve months, \$341; 1883, twelve months, \$750; 1884, twelve months, \$584. During the past year the Association had aided in all 687 discharged persons; and found employment for 374 persons, had given furniture to sixty-eight families, sheltered in the Home, 148 Bay Street, 250; given meals; board to 380; paid rent for twenty-four; paid fare to homes or where work was to be procured for twenty-nine, distributed 339 articles of clothing; forty-two articles of furniture; fifty-nine tools. The number of meals given in the Home was 3,759. The Association this year opened a special lodging home for discharged female prisoners, which had already proved of great value in saving some, though it had only been a few months opened. The system was very complete and effective. Another pleasing feature in the work was the lending system. The Association lent out to discharged prisoners during the past year, \$279.47, and have received back \$325.67, part of which was due on loans made in 1883. The Association also maintains efficient Sabbath schools at the Central Prison, Mercer Reformatory and the gaol, besides employing a teacher to give general instruction to those desirous of acquiring elementary education.