

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, FEB. 3, 1855.

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

Of all the Institutions connected with the Church, none rank higher in importance than those which, while they inculcate the principles of true religion, at the same time contribute to the education of the people. In England the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, has particularly distinguished itself in this way. This Society has not confined itself to the dissemination of the Scriptures, and the Book of Common Prayer as their appropriate accompaniment; but wherever its operations extend, it carries along with them a system of public instruction, to make them more available. From the earlier rudiments of knowledge, to an acquaintance with human science, in so far as the revealed Word of God makes it necessary, the educational books of the Society are admirably adapted to the comprehension of the pupil, and are as easily handled and made useful by the teacher. It was only about a fortnight since, that we read in an English paper, an account of the meeting of a Diocesan Board of Education, where it was stated that the Society had in progress a series of books, some of which had already been issued, which were at least equal, and by many thought to be superior to the books of the National Societies. There is one grand feature too, which pervades every work of the S. P. C. K.—a vein of true religion and morality runs like a thread of gold through every page, and stamps it with a sterling merit. Later Institutions of the Church, finding nothing to improve upon in its productions. The Colonial Church and School Society, which is doing much good in this Diocese, by the unobtrusive but effectual way in which it pursues its educational objects, uses the books of the S. P. C. K. and desires none better. Whether it be to teach the children of the Church her distinctive principles, from an exposition of the Catechism to an exposition of the Articles; or adapting themselves to older and more comprehensive minds, they expose error, and direct in the way to avoid it, as well latitudinarianism as a superstitious extreme, they are all that is required to arm the Churchman, young or old, against the assaults of open or insidious foes.

In so far the publications of the S. P. C. K. may be understood as having a denominational character. Many of them are strictly so, for the Society is one of those noble emanations of the Church, which, were its distinctiveness taken away, its beauty would be marred, and its usefulness would be no longer acknowledged. There is very little of the exclusive spirit, however, in its educational series, and in the majority of the Books, none at all. While it is a Church Society, it offers to others, with true religious philanthropy, the benefits which it has been at so much pains to make available to its own. To the Church, it gives the Book of Common Prayer, the Catechism, the Articles of Religion and the Creeds, and various expositions—to all the world besides it offers a general system of useful instruction. Its Bible is without note or comment, and at this distance from its fountain head, Romanist or Socinian, who desires to know the truth, can be gratified for less than a shilling sterling, with the unadulterated Word. With its books of secular instruction mingle no sectarianism. If they teach the pupil his duty to God, they teach also, without bias, his duty to his neighbour. With this high qualification, reading and spelling, grammar and geography, arithmetic and mathematics, science and history, abound in its catalogue; and it would be difficult to gather from any elementary educational system, a more complete apparatus for either the day or Sunday school than is therein afforded. It is a matter of wonder to many, that when the Report of a late Superintendent of Education gave to the Province a list of Books, and recommended them for the use of the schools of the Country, the excellent books of this Society, which are superior to many he has named, should have escaped his observation. We do not attribute an intentional omission, but from whatever other cause this may have arisen, it shows how necessary it is, even in matters which Churchmen may think do not immediately concern them, that they should be watchful for the public good. The consequence is, that there is not a school in the Province without the pale of the Church, where the children are at present instructed from the educational series of a Society to whose exertions the world is so much indebted; and within her pale it has happened, that many other books are used, which it would be much better were they superseded by those which are published by and under the sanction of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Wherever there are Church Schools, it should be

the chief care of their trustees or teachers to have them supplied with elementary books from this Society. The more of them can be procured at the Depository in Halifax. It would not be long, we feel sure, before the example would be copied by their dissenting brethren around them, many of whom well know how to appreciate the superior system of education, which Church Institutions encourage and foster. These only require an acquaintance with the publications of the Society to acknowledge their superiority. We shall then have, at least, one good series of School Books in the Province, and the nondescript host of now fangled and old-fashioned English and American books will receive a discountenance which it may be sincerely hoped they will never recover. A material guarantee will also be afforded for the combination of religion with common school education, which under God, is the best training to fit our youth for a virtuous life in this world, and for communion with the Saviour in the world that is to come.

R. M. STEAMSHIP AFRICA.

THE R. M. Steamship *Africa* arrived on Tuesday morning last, in 27 days from Liverpool. Important news was expected by this mail, but it is the most barren of intelligence of any since the war commenced. There is however, something satisfactory in the account of the progress of the Allies in the Crimea. If they have not yet stormed Sebastopol, they do not seem to be intermitting preparations for that terrible event. The arrival of Omar Pacha would probably lead to a closer investment of the besieged with a view to cut off their supplies. Disease was still fearfully prevalent, owing to the bad weather, and unavoidable exposure; but there were signs of amendment, even amidst this discouragement. Immense quantities of ammunition and supplies of all kinds had been landed at Balaklava, the troops were raising huts, and very shortly it was hoped, a dry roof and waterproof lodgings would make a winter campaign endurable in the Crimea. There was some danger indeed, that the huts might be taken for fuel, which was exceedingly scarce—as an instance of which, Col. Bell of the Royals, relates, that being an old campaigner he did not disdain to cut his sticks at a distance from the camp, and carry his fagot on his back, to his quarters to cook his steak. The picturesque of the allies, before this famous Russian fortress has sadly succumbed to stern realities, and it requires all the indomitable British spirit, and the French recklessness of heart, to bear up under the difficulties they have had to encounter. It is to be hoped they will soon find a recompense in the attainment of their object, for their arduous labors. The roads were unfortunately, still so bad, that it was impossible to proceed to the distribution of the great mass of stores of all kinds that had been put ashore at Balaklava, and there was danger of their being spoilt by exposure.

We would not be surprised if the Emperor Nicholas, having at length arrived at a just discernment of the determination of the Allies, and seeing in prospective the loss by war of the only portion of Russia that is worthy of the abode of civilization, should endeavour to avert so signal a disaster by yielding to the terms upon which the Western Powers will consent to negotiate a peace. It is to this determination of the Allies, that the accession of Austria to their alliance, may be attributed. Had Menschikoff been able to raise the siege of Sebastopol we should never have heard of Austrian co-operation. Now, our Austrian friend, upon whose good faith we place no reliance, is just in a position to do us a world of mischief in such a negotiation. Should Nicholas accept the Four points as a basis, it will be the task of Austrian diplomacy to preserve to Russia intact all her possessions in the Black Sea, taking advantage however of the occasion to strengthen her own position there, that she may be more upon an equality with her ambitious neighbour—but that Great Britain or France will reap any benefit from all the expenditure of blood and treasure, in the event of a peace so made, is not to be for a moment believed. Russia may be crippled, but will return to her prey in a few years with increased strength and more savage determination. Nothing will be more easy than that she should give up her pretension to the protectorate of the Greek Church in Turkey, which at the best was only a pretence to cover her ulterior designs. And will Great Britain and France be content to make peace with no better guarantee for the future than a free navigation of the Black Sea, the present reduction of the Russian naval force there, perhaps the dismantling of Sebastopol, and perhaps the establishment of an Austrian protectorate of the Principalities? We have our fears of such a result, notwithstanding the warlike ardour of the nation. It would be far preferable to this, that a Congress of all the Powers should sit, and that the only topic of

discussion should be the partition of Turkey, giving to each a check upon the other that should preserve the balance of power. Great Britain and France are the only obstacles now to such a division—who can tell that a proposal of this nature may not eventually proceed from one or other of them as the wisest mode of solving eastern complications. Should either make it, the other would be powerless to prevent the spoliation, and must submit or be sacrificed. We may live to see more wonderful political events than is here contemplated.

DIOCESAN CHURCH SOCIETY

SPECIAL NOTICE.

The Executive Committee of D. C. S. have resolved with the concurrence of the President, to postpone the annual Sermons and evening Public Meeting, appointed for February, until such time as shall be agreed upon at the General Meeting of the Society. It is therefore proposed to limit the business to be transacted on the 16th inst. to the filling up of the vacancies in the Executive Committee, the appointment of Officers, and the ratification of the opinion expressed by the Meeting in October last on the motion for a change of the day appointed for the Annual Meetings of the Society.

It is proposed to defer the consideration of other matters to an adjourned meeting to be held at such time as may be appointed on the 16th inst. of which due notice will be given by advertisement as usual. (By order of the Executive Committee.)

EDWIN GILPIN, Jun.

Secretary.

Feb. 1, 1855.

At a Special Meeting on the 31st ult. the Executive Committee upon provision for Widows and Orphans were requested to resume their efforts for the desired object.

E. G. Jr

LEGISLATIVE.

The House of Assembly met on Saturday last, after adjournment from Dec. 14, 1854. A Bill was introduced by Hon. Attorney General to enlarge and amend the new Practice Act. Also a Bill by Hon. Provincial Secretary to amend Chapter 135 of the Revised Statutes "of witnesses and evidence and the proof of written documents." Also a Bill for the safe custody of persons charged with offence, and to make provision for prevention of offences by insane persons. Attention was called by Hon. Mr. Johnston to the necessity of having the Bills printed, in order that legal minds in and out of the House might bring their experience to bear upon them. After some discussion on the subject, the question of Printing was laid over till Tuesday, 30th.

The Hon. Financial Secretary brought down the estimates for the current year, and moved that a supply be granted to Her Majesty. It being a very early day of the Session, and a very thin House, it was after some pertinent observations from Hon. Members deemed desirable to withdraw the motion for the present.

The House adjourned on Monday without a quorum. On Tuesday the Hon. Provincial Secretary brought down correspondence relative to the transfer of the Customs Department to the government of Nova Scotia.—Also printed correspondence relative to the mines and minerals.—Also despatches relative to the Militia law, which it would appear is an abortion. Discussion took place on the appointment of a Committee to arrange the standing Committees of the House. Mr. Wier introduced a Bill to alter a road in the peninsula of Halifax. A resolution passed to go into Committee of Supply to-morrow. The Hon. Attorney General brought down the Post Office Returns for 1854. It appears that under the three-penny postage system the revenue of the Post Office amounts to within £100 of the sum derived under the old rate. Next year we dare say there will be an increase over the old rate.

The House on Wednesday went into Committee of Supply, and passed a number of votes for special services.

Hon. Financial Secretary, by command of His Excellency, laid on the table of the House the account current from the Receiver General's office for the past year. At the commencement of the year a balance of £17,266 remained in the Treasury—the balance remaining now amounts to £11,000 about £6,000 less than last year. The whole receipts amounted to £188,000. £20,300 of this sum was derived from the deposits in the Savings Bank and £17,000 from the issue of new Treasury notes, making together £31,300, which deducted from the gross receipts, leaves a balance of about £156,000,—this compared with the receipts from the same source for 1853 shows an increase of from £29,000 to £30,000. The payments during the year amount to £134,000, or £6,000 more than the actual receipts. £68,000 of that sum was absorbed by railway expenditure. These statements were not to be taken as exhibiting the exact net revenue for the year, but only as an approximation to.

Some conversation in explanation took place, in which it was stated that all accounts from collectors were in, but one from a collector of light duty had not yet come in.