

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

VOL 15.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd, 1886.

No. 39.

Notes of the Week.

IF there is any truth in the announcement that Sir Charles Dilke is about to re-enter public life as the proprietor and editor of a London journal, he must have a phenomenal store of brazen effrontery. A man cannot vindicate his character by defying the moral sense of the community he has so grossly outraged. It would be wrong to follow even a flagrant transgressor with vindictive persecution; but an attempt to assume a prominent position as a leader of public opinion is sure to provoke indignant protests.

THE statistical report presented to the Methodist Conference, shows the following results. Ministers and probationers, 1,610—decrease, twenty-three; value of Church property, \$9,895,043—increase, \$764,236; members, 197,479—increase, 27,676; Sabbath schools, 2,675—decrease, thirty-two; scholars attending Sabbath schools, 191,185—increase, 16,133; Sabbath school scholars meeting in class, 31,496—increase, 12,966; Sabbath school scholars who have taken total abstinence pledge, 37,280; Sabbath school papers taken, 229,639.

ARCHBISHOP FABRE has spoken out very decidedly against the holding of political meetings on Sunday. He says: Political passions are inimical to the meditation necessary to the observation of Sunday, and are prone to make Christians forget that they must, on these days, give themselves up to pious exercises. This custom threatens more and more to take a footing amongst us. The exhortation of the Archbishop, however, has not produced an immediate effect, as the papers report that in many parishes political meetings were held last Sabbath after Mass.

THE Congregational Church in Canada and the religious community generally will regret the departure of the Rev. Dr. Stevenson, of Emmanuel Church, Montreal. Dr. Stevenson, says the *Canadian Independent*, has received an invitation to the pastorate of the Brixton Road Chapel, vacant since the death of Mr. J. Baldwin Brown. The friends of that London suburb have shown, as was to be expected, their appreciation of talent combined with holiness of life; we however start back from the very thought of losing our estimable friend, but we understand the call is accepted.

THE Woodstock *Sentinel-Review*, a journal conducted with enterprise and ability, and now published daily, gives voice to the general opinion as to the proper place of religious denominations in matters political: The Methodist Conference at Toronto did a sensible thing when it refused to pass a resolution, in effect recommending Methodists to take part as such in political contests. There should be no sectarianism in politics. Men should vote as citizens, without reference to their religious opinions. The introduction of denominational discussion into politics is a curse to any country, no matter by whom it is brought about.

MATTERS in Bulgaria are proceeding more quietly this week. The chances of Alexander's restoration to the throne are visibly lessening. The Powers who signed the Berlin Treaty seem to leave him to his fate. Prince Bismarck, instead of smoothing his path, has done diplomatically what he could to render Alexander's resumption of the Bulgarian throne impossible. The German Chancellor's action throughout these recent complications has been enigmatic. Austria is becoming more pronounced in her antagonism to Russian interference in the Balkan Principalities, and this antagonism may lead to decisive results. It is hinted that Russia would prefer waiting till spring for the outbreak of hostilities.

In a sketch of the Hon. John McMillan, of Portland, N. B., who died on the 12th inst., the *St. John Telegraph* says: His official position, as Post Office

Inspector, kept him in constant acquaintance with a very large proportion of the business men and people of the Province, all of whom will bear cheerful testimony to his uniform courtesy and urbanity. In our own city his circle of friends was very large, and the tidings of his demise will bring them heartfelt sorrow. He was a devout Christian and prominent member of St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church, of which he was a constant attendant down to the date of his last illness. Charitable, generous and hospitable, he was the friend of all, and had not an enemy in the world. A kind and affectionate husband and father, a worthy citizen, a faithful public officer, a good man has gone to his rest, dying without regret, but regretted by all.

PUBLIC attention having been called to the demoralizing effects of gambling in Montreal, it is gratifying to notice that an end has been put to the more flagrant instances. The wheel of fortune which was set up in St. Peter's Cathedral, and run in the interest of the bazaar, has been discontinued. The respectable portion of the whole community, Roman Catholic or Protestant, will rejoice that the Roman Catholic Church has thus stamped with its disapprobation open gambling. The gambling carried on by means of a mechanical contrivance by clockwork has also been condemned by the courts. Prompt and decisive measures are sufficient to stop these barefaced methods of swindling the unsuspecting dupes of their own avarice. People who indulge in gambling are not fit subjects for pity, but the devices of those who prey on human weakness have no claim to toleration.

THE Duke of Argyll, says an exchange, in opening a bazaar at Tarbert, Loch Fyne, for the liquidation of the debt on the new church, said it was one of the handsomest structures in the West Highlands. He was much struck with its tower, the original copy of which was St. Giles's and the original of which again was a church in Newcastle. He spoke of the great revival in the Establishment during the last forty years. Immediately after the Disruption, Norman Macleod and himself had almost despaired of its continuous existence. Now, however, in our towns and cities it is as powerful a body as there is in existence. Its weak part is in the Highlands, but in this ancient township was a new church worthy of the best times of the Church of Scotland, a teeming congregation, and an excellent minister—the son of one of his own tenants. The great cause of the weakness of the Establishment in the Highlands is the want of Gaelic preachers. No language in the world, he added, conveys the emotions of religious sentiment as the Gaelic does.

FRENCH aggression has of late been peculiarly offensive. The trouble in Madagascar does not seem to be ended yet. New claims are being urged, in order to obtain more complete control over the island. In the New Hebrides fresh troubles have arisen. A despatch from Melbourne states that the Rev. Mr. Macdonald, Presbyterian missionary at Havannah Harbor, in a letter to Lieutenant Marx, of the British gunboat *Swinger*, says that the French Hebrides Company have seized the lands of the native Christian mission, alleging prior title, and that the French commandant threatened the natives with an armed force if they resisted. The company also claim the lands of other British subjects. Mr. Macdonald asserts that the French practically exercise sovereignty over the islands, and a collision between the natives and the French is imminent. Threats have been made against Mr. Macdonald and the native Christians, and he demands assistance from the English squadron. The Premiers of the Australian Colonies are about to hold a conference to consider the situation.

SIR William Dawson's inaugural address as President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science has been most favourably received and commented on. The Belfast *Witness* says: The British Association is particularly happy this year in

its President. Principal Sir William Dawson is not only one of our foremost scientific authorities; but he happily combines with the wisest knowledge the deep reverence for the Creator of all in which some of his predecessors in the chair have unfortunately been badly deficient. In him we have another illustration of the dwelling side by side of the greatest scientific attainments with the profoundest piety. On Wednesday night we had no sneers at religion—no thrusting of the Creator out of the realms of His own creation—none of that scientific bigotry which has once or twice disfigured the meetings. Speaking of recent discussions on the problem of origins, he said well and characteristically. In entering on such questions we should proceed with caution and reverence, feeling that we are on holy ground, and that though, like Moses of old, we may be armed with all the learning of our time, we are in the presence of that which while it burns is not consumed; of a mystery which neither observation, experiment nor induction can ever fully solve. It would be well if all the Presidents of the Association and all scientific authorities acted on this dictum.

THE desire for Christian union is growing in depth and intensity. Those communions that in several things are wide apart are beginning to give public expression to the growing sentiment in favour of union. In response to the wish expressed by the Bishop of Algoma in his sermon at the opening of the Provincial Synod of the Episcopal Church, the Rev. J. Edgar Hill preached in Erskine Church, on Christian Unity. At the close he said: My mind has been directed to this topic to-day by the wise brave, Christian words of the Bishop of Algoma in one of the churches of this city last Wednesday evening. The Bishop evidently longs for a great national Protestant Church in this Dominion, and, moreover believes in not only the possibility, but the practicability of such a Church. The same idea has been in my mind ever since I came to Canada, and I have given public expression to it several times. It is the highest conception of the Christian Church; and if the Protestantism of this Dominion is not equal to the solution of this problem and to the sacrifice on the part of individuals which might have to be made for the national good, and the cause of Christ, it is a poor affair. But I believe it is equal to that union, and a great deal more; and I do trust the Bishop's words, so eminently Catholic and Christian, will not pass away without some fruit. It is the national religious well being that is at stake.

RECENT stories of destitution in Labrador were found to have been greatly exaggerated, but again it is asserted that widespread destitution and misery actually exist both in Labrador and Newfoundland. This time the story purports to be given on the authority of a member of the Newfoundland Legislature. Not less, he says, than 135,000 of the population are not only in actual want, but are absolutely without the possibility of earning a dollar to keep themselves alive. During the fall and winter 30,000 Newfoundlanders go to Labrador every season, and the average catch was formerly 300 quintals per vessel. This only enabled them and 20,000 other people dependent on them to eke out a bare existence. But this year the Labrador catch is not one-third the average, and not enough to pay the cost of transportation and supplies advanced by the merchants. Then there are 15,000 resident fishermen at Labrador who are, if possible, in a worse plight than those who go there from Newfoundland. All these 65,000 people to-day are in a state of great destitution, and will be entirely dependent upon Government support for existence. They are scattered along 3,000 miles of the most barren and most dangerous coast in the world, and unless prompt and extensive measures are taken to send these people supplies, it will be impossible for relief steamers to reach them during winter and hundreds of them must inevitably starve. If this account is true, immediate help is urgently needed; if a fabrication, the originators of it deserve a punishment that can be felt.