

NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE terrible affliction which has overtaken Hull calls for speedy and effective help. While the destitute and homeless everywhere have claims upon the benevolent, our own countrymen ought to have the first attention in their time of sore trial. We have no doubt the people of Ontario will respond to the call very liberally and very promptly.

VARIOUS statements, more or less erroneous, have been current recently respecting the Pope's health. The truth is that, though no notable malady exists, the Holy Father's medical advisers are not satisfied with his condition. Every cause of mortal trouble that arises throws him into a state of nervous prostration. Overwork and want of the exercise and salubrious air to which he has been accustomed, are telling upon him disastrously, and those who are around him assert that his health is failing visibly. His medical advisers are very anxious that he should have change of air this summer, but it seems that the threats and pressure brought to bear upon him by those who would fain chain him to the stake, have hitherto availed to prevent him from taking any such decision.

OUR good friend and contemporary, the "Canadian Independent" is concerned about us poor Presbyterians, our accredited standards, and a threatened "little manual," the appearance of which, it fears, will shew that our Presbyterianism as "formulated" in our symbolical books is not in accord with that which is actually held by our members and taught from our pulpits. There is not the slightest ground for anxiety, good friend. All that is aimed at is a handy little manual on Presbyterian Church Government, about which some think we have not lately been saying enough because we have thought that the argument in its favour was so unanswerable and so evident as to need but little either of exposition or enforcement. No fear. Presbyterianism is not at all dead, neither are Presbyterians at all anxious to shift their ground or apologize for their existence.

THE extent to which simony is practised in the Church of England is said to be very great. And this, in spite of the oath which every minister is required to take before installation by the bishop, as follows: "I do swear that I have made no simoniacal payment, contract, or promise, directly or indirectly, by myself or by any other, to my knowledge or with my consent, to any person or persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring or obtaining of this ecclesiastical place, preferment, office, or living, nor will at any time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of payment, contract, or promise made by any other, without my knowledge or consent. So help me God, through Jesus Christ." A clerical agent, Mr. Stark, has testified before the Royal Commission on sale or exchange of benefices that, notwithstanding this solemn oath, "Clergymen of high standing freely and unhesitatingly sell and purchase advowsons, with the understanding that immediate possession is to be given." Secresy, he said, is insisted on in these transactions, because they are illegal and involve severe penalties.

WE are pleased to see that Professor McLaren is not going to have it all his own way about the Rule of Faith, and that Archbishop Lynch once more makes his appeal to private judgment and thinks that his readers will understand what *he* means, though they would be all at sea about comprehending what the Bible may teach. Now we shall perhaps come to understand how a humble peasant in a back township of Canada is able without the aid of private judgment to find out the infallible Church, and afterwards to understand what that infallible Church teaches. Of course the archbishop has not meddled with arguments as yet. He has rather fought shy of that sort of work in his public appearances hitherto. But no doubt a good time is coming. We are all attention. The lists are set. The combatants have their lances

in rest. The spectators are eager. Now for it. We shall at last learn how the humble Irish labourer comes to know what has been believed "always, everywhere and by all," and what good there is in an "infallible living speaker" unless there be an equally "infallible living listener." Ordinary folks might fancy that they had as fair a chance of understanding a letter written by the apostle Paul as one fathered by Archbishop Lynch or even by Leo XIII. But we shall, we hope, know all about it some of these days.

OUR contemporary, the Halifax "Witness" comments as follows on a letter which lately appeared in our columns: "RESTLESSNESS IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.—A writer in our respected contemporary THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN presents a very woeful picture of our Church. Very few ministers are satisfied with their congregations and very few congregations are satisfied with their ministers. Both parties seek change and even resort to 'wire pulling' in order to effect changes. The picture is so dark and doleful that we are persuaded it must have been drawn during a very chilly day, by a man with a very sore head. It set us to pass in review our pastors and people in the Maritime Provinces, with whose circumstances we have a pretty thorough acquaintance, and we testify that the picture drawn by the writer referred to is totally inapplicable here. The cases of 'restlessness' are very few indeed, not one in twenty. The rule is peace, cordiality, warm affection, thorough confidence between pastors and people. We cannot see how matters can be so very widely different with our brethren in the West." We have but to add that we inserted the paper in question because it came from one who from his position ought to know of what he speaks, while he is one who would be about the last in the Church to be described as a "sore head." He very possibly was mistaken. Only we have not heard either verbally, or by letter, a single whisper of protest against his statements. We think he meant not to be lugubrious, but only to warn against an evil which he believed to be on the increase. We are delighted to understand that there is not the shadow of a shade of such a tendency among our brethren by the sea.

WHAT Scotland has gained by the "preaching of the Word" may be learned very clearly and in very few words from the following portion of the famous letter of Duncan Forbes of Culloden, within a short time after the Revolution of 1688, respecting the proper mode of governing the country: "The kingdom of Scotland did anciently stand in the power of superiors over vassals, and chiefs over clans. It was always burdensome to king and kingdom in time of peace. These chiefs and superiors were proud, were their own law administrators, and were very hurtful in war. Strifes among the nobles caused the troubles at Flodden, at Pinkey, at Solway, and other occasions. These nobles and chiefs ruined the King's affairs, and those of the country; and they made the Scotch armies a prey to their enemies. Efforts were made by several kings to break up the feudal power of the baron and chief, but they were unable to do so until the Reformation, when by the preaching of the Gospel it was done. Since the Reformation the nation stands upon another foundation, for the Gospel brought light upon the consciences of the people, and they would neither follow superior nor chief except so far as they were convinced the undertaking was consonant to the laws of God and the kingdom. When King Charles I. came to the crown he found the country in one entire peace; theft and robbery extinguished, vassalage and clanship broken, and exact obedience to the law, with the Gospel preached all over the kingdom; an orderly discipline exercised in a well-governed Presbyterian Church without schism, contradiction, or division. Never was prince better started than he, for he governed easily a people who had nothing to crave, but to have his commands, and obey. But the designs of the Charleses and King James were the establishment of Popery and Prelacy, which the Scotch people disliked, and the overthrow of Presbytery which they loved."

THE April number of the "Missionary Record" of the Church of Scotland devotes several pages to accounts of the progress of the work of the Church among the Jews, which is very extensive. Five stations and one sub-station are maintained at Constantinople, Smyrna, Alexandria, Beirut, Salonica, at which there are five ordained missionaries, with seventeen or eighteen male and female teachers, colporteurs, and evangelists. The past year has been one of much encouragement. The Jews seem to be awakening to a spirit of inquiry into Christianity. At Smyrna the attendance on the weekly meetings for the study of the prophecies increased, until it reached on several occasions to upwards of 100. One week there were 119 present, probably the largest number of Jews who ever attended a missionary meeting in Turkey. Many Jews visit the missionary, and many are under regular instruction as professed inquirers. The schools at the various stations have also been well filled. The "Record" says the greatest obstacle to be met in Jewish missions is not the obstinate belief of that people, but the indifference of the Church at home. "The excuses for the neglect of the evangelization of the Jews will not stand the test of history or Scripture. Their conversion has not been found impracticable. The testimony of those who have studied the subject is that the success of Jewish missions, since the beginning of the century, when the work was fairly entered on, has been, at least, as great as that of missions to the heathen. Even in our own small staff six agents are converted Jews." Missions among the Jews in Turkey were begun upwards of thirty years ago. Since then thousands of Jewish children have been educated in the schools, and the day of reproach to girls for learning to read has passed, and they form the great majority of the scholars. In this period the Judæo-Spanish Bible has been prepared and published and much Christian literature circulated.

AN "Alphabetical Guide to the Protestant Churches in Italy" has just been published in Naples, containing a full list of the towns where any Protestant church is to be found, and of all the churches existing in the same city, together with the names of the pastors or evangelists. The first interesting fact to notice is that now there is almost no town, even of secondary importance, without a Protestant church. Let it be remembered that Italy has been freely open to evangelization only within these last twenty years. Nowadays there are evangelical churches at Alexandria, Ancona, Aosta, Aquila, Arezzo, Bergamo, Bologna, Brescia, Cagliari, Civita Vecchia, Como, Cremona, Ferrara, Genoa, Leghorn, Lucca, Messina, Milan, Modena, Naples, etc. It is observed, in the next place, that some of the Protestant churches in Italy are composed of born Protestant people, who use in their worship a foreign language (such as the English, Scotch, and American churches), and some are, properly speaking, the Italian churches—viz., they use the Italian language in their worship, and are composed of Italians converted from Popery during these last twenty years. These latter churches are the result of evangelistic efforts. The former (speaking foreign languages) amount to fifty; that is, twenty-three English-speaking, twenty French-speaking, and seven German-speaking. The Italian churches are more numerous. There are already, *one hundred and thirty-eight* of these organized Italian churches. These belong to five different denominations, and here are the statistics up to the 1st of January of the present year: Methodist churches, 44; Vaudois churches, 39; Free Church churches, 21; Baptist churches, 19; the "Brethren" churches, 15. Each of the largest cities has more than one Protestant Italian church. Florence, for instance, has one Methodist church, two Vaudois churches, one Free church, and one congregation of "The Brethren." Naples has three Methodist churches, one Vaudois church, one Free church, and three Baptist churches. Rome has two Methodist churches, one Vaudois church, one Free church, three Baptist churches, and one congregation of "The Brethren."