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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

At a missionary meeting lately held in Exeter Hall, London, a well known Church of England clergyman, in the course of his speech, said that the English people were ashamed that General Gordon was left without support and without defence. So enthusiastically in accord with the sentiment of the speaker were the vast audience, numbering over three thousand, that they sprang to their feet and cheered wildly. To the popular mind, the anomalous inaction of the British Government is incomprehensible.

A RECENT despatch informs us that the Pope has sent Bishop Berwick to Scotland to investigate and report upon the archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh. Mr. Errington, the unofficial British representative at the Vatican, has persuaded the Pope to create the next Archbishop of Scotland a Cardinal. The *Paris Francoise* says it believes that the Pope is preparing a fresh note to the powers in regard to the decision of the Italian Court of Cassation in favour of converting the property of the Propaganda into rentes. It understands that the Pope will declare in the note that a compromise with Italy is impossible on the basis of existing laws.

UNLESS something startling suddenly occurs, there is not likely to be any definite solution of the Soudan difficulty till the London Conference assembles in the first week in June. The preliminary difficulties as to holding a conference are now overcome. The conditions stipulated for by M. Ferry will no doubt be amicably adjusted, and the various European powers interested will be represented at the London Conference. Whether a satisfactory understanding will be reached by that august body remains to be seen. Meanwhile there will be a lull in the general complaints of the supineness of the Gladstone Ministry as to their management of Egyptian affairs.

DRAMATIC troupes are going to and fro continually. Some of them specially appeal to the lowest and most debased elements in human nature. One of these lately visited the principal Canadian towns. Wherever they went the dead walls were placarded with showy pictures of ballet girls. It seems to us that civic and municipal authorities ought to exercise a certain degree of censorship in the matter of theatrical advertising. Much of it is unquestionably demoralizing. After the company referred to had performed in Montreal, several of the ministers of different denominations spoke very plainly, and warned their people against the corrupt and corrupting influences of the modern stage.

ONCE more in the British House of Commons, the bill legalizing marriage with a deceased wife's sister, has been passed by a large majority, the vote being 238 for and 127 against. Its fate for the present will be decided in the House of Lords. For years it has gone to the Upper House with increasing majorities in its favour, and has, by the lords spiritual and temporal, been rejected by diminishing votes against it. Recent additions to the House of Lords have been made and it is surmised that possibly because of these additions, and the known favour of the Royal Family, the measure may this time become law, and bring British legislation on this subject into harmony with that of Canada and Aust. alia.

In reference to the difficulties in prosecuting their work by our missionaries at Indore, the *Glasgow Christian Leader* says "The Canadian missionaries at Indore, to whose trying case we referred some months ago, have not yet found the protection from annoyance which they anticipated. A most determined effort is still being made to break up their work, though it is hoped that the good offices of Lord Ripon may bring about a settlement. The missionaries generally throughout India deprecate agitation, but if the result of Sir Lepel Griffin's mischievous attempt to expel the missionaries should be the complete prohibition of Christianity in a native state, the aid

of the Christian people of Britain will be evoked. Sir Lepel will assuredly discover that he has committed a very serious mistake.

At the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held at Philadelphia last week, it was officially stated that there are ninety-nine annual conferences, fourteen missions, 11,349 travelling preachers, 12,026 local preachers, and 1,769,534 members and probationers. The increase in the past four years was 69,232. The number of travelling preachers who died was 654, and of members 58,691. The accessions were 158,737. In 1883 there were 18,741 churches and 9,815 parsonages, valued at \$79,238,000. There are ten theological seminaries, forty-five colleges, sixty-six classical institutions, and eight female colleges. In their addresses, the bishops referred to the laxity of the laws on divorce, and asked for more stringent regulations regarding the solemnization of marriage between divorced persons.

NIHILISM seems to spread in Russia with alarming rapidity. Espionage does little to hinder the dissemination of its peculiar ideas. A rigid censorship of the Russian press does not prevent the intermittent appearance of anarchic literature. Suppressed in one place, it re-appears in another, is largely read, and passed on from hand to hand till, worn out, it falls to pieces. Arrests continue all over the empire, but they do not seem to strike terror in the minds of the plotters. Late despatches state that the imposing ceremonies intended to celebrate at Moscow the Czarewitch's coming of age, will not now be held because of threatened plots having been discovered. Numerous arrests have just been made, including a number of artillery officers, students and public officials. This duel between the two extremes of the Russian nation cannot continue indefinitely.

THE question of disestablishment is coming well to the front both in England and Scotland. Radically opposite opinions are freely expressed. It would have been surprising some years since, outside the ranks of the ritualists, to have found the minister of a State endowed Church expressing any but the most uncompromising opinion in opposition to disestablishment. This state of things no longer continues. The last number of the *Christian Leader* says that the Rev. C. C. Macdonald, St. Clement's, Aberdeen, in his sermon at the opening of the Synod, said that the relationship between the Church and State was incompatible with political justice, and was injurious to other Christian Churches in Scotland. He held that as a Church they should admit that the present state of matters was intolerable, and if they could not discover a remedy they could not reasonably refuse to allow others to try disestablishment. A proposal by Mr. Macdonald that the Assembly be asked to take steps to have the whole subject investigated by a royal commission was adopted by thirty-four votes to eight.

AN exchange says - There is some trouble at present among the churches in British Guiana. The four principal churches in the colony are the Episcopal, or Church of England, the Kirk of Scotland, the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Church of Rome. The Church of England receives State aid to the amount of \$50,080, the Kirk of Scotland has \$24,500, the Wesleyan Church has \$7,000 and the Romish Church \$12,000. Some of the good people of the colony have got it into their heads that because a part of the public revenue is raised from taxes on the sale of intoxicating liquors there is something radically wrong in the State and in religion. The Church of Christ, they think, should not be dependent in any way, either directly nor indirectly, on the dram shop. The cry, in consequence, is raised for disendowment. This sentiment on the part of the colonists is warmly encouraged by the disestablishment party in the mother country. It is becoming more and more a recognized fact in these later times that the Church is better without State aid. The example of the United States in this matter has had a powerful influence. A free

Church in a free State is incompatible with government grants.

ALTHOUGH it has been announced that the Quebec lottery bill had been defeated on its second reading, there is great unwillingness on the part of its promoters to accept this decision and to defer to the outspoken opinion so strongly expressed against it throughout the Dominion. It is stated in various quarters that by a manoeuvre it is to be again brought up. A member who is known to be in its favour is unable from illness to be in his place, but the first opportunity when he is present is to be taken advantage of, and an attempt made to obtain a vote on it a second time. Ecclesiastics are sometimes persistent men, whether in a good or a bad cause, but the Father whose name is associated with the scheme though phenomenally persistent, has gained a notoriety far from enviable. It is but just to say that several of the Romish Church dignitaries are decidedly opposed to such a scandalous device as the establishment of a provincial lottery. For the fair fame of Canada it is to be hoped this, though it does not deserve such honourable interment, will be consigned to the tomb in which the "massacred innocents" sleep their last sleep.

ANOTHER of the successful convocations of the season has been that of Victoria College, Cobourg. On Sabbath morning, 4th inst., the Rev. Mr. Parker, of London, preached a stirring and thoughtful sermon from Luke vii. 20 22, after which Dr. Nelles addressed the graduates. The Rev. Dr. Sutherland preached the baccalaureate sermon, an able and eloquent discourse suited to the occasion, from John xvii. 3. Another noteworthy effort was the annual lecture delivered before the Theological Union by Professor Shaw of the Wesley College, Montreal. The subject of his lecture, "Future Punishment," was discussed in a calm and temperate spirit. He maintained with firmness and decision the orthodox view that punishment was everlasting. He thought there was not much serious danger of the 35,000 Methodist ministers in the world becoming latitudinarian. On the contrary, he claimed that Methodism was becoming the most conservative champion of orthodoxy. In conclusion, he exhorted the members of the Theological Union to present this doctrine of retribution with great tenderness and affection, and so show, like the great evangelists of all the Churches, that they were more concerned in saving souls than saving a creed.

THE painful suspense occasioned by the first news of the wreck of the steamship, *State of Florida*, is in some measure allayed by the arrival of the steamer *Titania* at Montreal with twenty-four of the shipwrecked passengers and crew of the first-named vessel. To some relatives, it brings only the sad certainty that those on whose behalf they were both anxious and hopeful have perished in the ocean. The collision was dreadful, the sailing vessel going down the instant she cleared the steamer, and the latter keeping afloat for barely fifteen minutes afterward. At present, its occurrence is inexplicable. The night was unusually calm and not very dark. How two vessels with the proper lights burning and an attentive watch kept should not have been aware of each other's presence till the instant when they collided is a mystery that requires clearing up. The officers of the *City of Rome* who saw the signals of the Norwegian barque, and passed on, are receiving severe censure for their want of humanity. Their conduct seems to be another illustration of the tendency to sacrifice the courtesies of life and the claims of humanity to business expediency. Who can make the fastest trip, is the problem the competing lines are trying to solve. The captain of the *City of Rome* is, as his record shows, both courageous and humane, and it would be matter for regret were a good reputation shattered by the desire to make a fast trip. The advances in marine engineering, and the increase of comfort for ocean passengers have, of late years, been great, but it is a question whether ordinary seamanship is not deteriorating.