

## NOTES OF THE WEEK.

ACCORDING to the official statement, the recent fire in Quebec destroyed 642 houses, rendering homeless 1,211 families, comprising 6,028 individuals. Two-thirds of the families burned out were uninsured, and therefore lost their all. A large amount of missing property has been recovered by detectives and restored to the owners.

THE reaction in favour of Mr. Gladstone's land law seems fairly to have set in in Ireland. If the leaders are infatuated, the people are evidently not, and the former in order not to be left high and dry are evidently inclined now to withdraw their opposition to the great measure of the English Premier and make the best of it. The likelihoods now are that the measure will pass with comparative rapidity through the House of Commons, and though there may be fears that the Lords will block the way, it is to be hoped for their own sakes that they will be better advised. They will never have the offer of so moderate a measure, and if wise, they will take it.

A LARGE number of peasants are emigrating from the Russian Province of Torksk to Siberia because of poverty. So great is the exodus that the ferry-boat on the Volga is taxed to the utmost in order to transport them across. Voluntary exile to Siberia is something new. Beneath a bridge over the Catharine Canal at St. Petersburg were found two rubber bags, twenty-one inches in diameter, containing one hundred and fifty pounds of dynamite. Each bag was provided with a fuse. It has been recently discovered that the officers and crew of the man-of-war which was stationed off the Peterhoff Palace as a guard to the Czar and imperial family are tainted with Nihilism.

THE Czar is living in complete seclusion at Peterhoff. The harbour is guarded by two gunboats and a torpedo boat, and the Palace by detachments of the Guards and Cossack patrols. He sees no one but the members of his suite and ministers, and when he takes a walk he is accompanied by an escort. He looks weary and haggard. The superstitious in St. Petersburg do not expect him to return alive. It is said Nihilists have been arrested in the woods, which almost surround the Castle, and attempts have been made to fire both the woods and Castle. It is stated, however, that precautions to secure the Czar's safety make it impossible for the Nihilists to reach him. It is reported that the Czar recently remarked that his subjects in the mines had no reason to complain, seeing he shared their captivity and was at the mercy of masters, more bloodthirsty than the Cossack. The Czarina is utterly broken down.

THE British Commons, by the adoption of a resolution last week, has practically given its endorsement to the plan of local option. The resolution was introduced by Sir Wilfred Lawson, who has long been known as one of the most sensible but persistent advocates of temperance in England. It declared that effect should be given by the necessary legislation to a former resolution, approved by the Commons last year, which affirmed the justice of conferring upon local communities the power to protect themselves against the liquor traffic. The resolution was carried by a majority of forty-two, Mr. Gladstone opposing it, and Mr. Bright and others of the Cabinet supporting it. In view of so considerable a majority, it is scarcely to be supposed that the Government will disregard the instructions expressed in the resolution. It can hardly do so on the ground that the measure is not needed. The drunkenness of the English working classes, both men and women, is proverbial.

THE closing exercises of the Ottawa Female College took place on the evening of Wednesday, the 22nd ult., and were of such a character that a local paper says, "they will not soon be forgotten by those

who were fortunate enough to be present." The College has during the past session been very successful, and its excellences are evidently being more and more highly appreciated. The programme at the closing meeting was a very attractive one, and the lady performers acquitted themselves in every part in such a manner as to call forth the hearty applause of the large and highly intellectual audience present. The following are the names of those who graduated on the occasion. Misses Sarah McKenzie, McDonald's Corners; Annie Pritchard, Wakefield; May Wilson, Picton; Mabel Perley, Ottawa; Lizzie Thompson, Aylwin; Louisa McLaren, Buckingham; Lizzie Wright, Ottawa; Minnie Baptist, Three Rivers; Agnes Reid, Cardinal; Maggie Blyth, Ottawa. In Music—Miss Jessie Monk, Ottawa. Dr. Kemp and his able associates are to be congratulated on the great success of the year, and every friend of the "higher education of women," in the true sense of that much abused phrase, will most cordially hope that the institution, over which the Dr. presides with so much ability, may continue to progress in the future as it has done in the past.

THE following table, shewing the population under Roman Catholic, Greek, and Protestant governments, shews which is actually growing

Year.	Rom. Cath.	Greek.	Protestant.	Total.
1500	80,000,000	20,000,000		100,000,000
1700	90,000,000	33,000,000	32,000,000	155,000,000
1830	134,164,000	60,000,000	193,624,000	387,788,000
1876	130,787,905	76,101,894	408,569,612	615,459,411

Surely these columns are moving in the right direction. It is sometimes claimed that the rush toward Protestantism is a rush too far, and that we lose in conviction more than we gain in freedom. But a careful study of the faiths of the English-speaking peoples answers all doubts. In 1800 there were 24,000,000 English-speaking people, of whom 14,000,000 were Protestants, 5,000,000 were Roman Catholic, and 4,500,000 were of no faith. In 1880 there were 81,000,000 English-speaking people, of whom 59,000,000 were Protestant, 13,500,000 were Roman Catholic, and 8,500,000 were of no faith. The English-speaking population increased in eighty years 337 per cent., the Roman Catholic only 145 per cent., while the Protestant increased 422 per cent., and those of no faith less than 100 per cent. These figures are not alarming. This is particularly so when we see leading sceptics "harking back," saying, "We were steadied by what our mothers taught us from the rejected Bible; but what will steady our children?"

THE French mission, sent out by the Government to explore the course of the Senegal and the Upper Niger, seems to have been quite successful; and the report of the party does much to soothe the pain of the terrible and mortifying defeat of the Flatters Mission over the Desert of Sahara. The company was in charge of Captain Gallieni, who seems to be a bold explorer and skilful manipulator of the savages of those wilds. He has gained the good will of the King of Segou, chief of the powerful tribe of the Bamboms scattered over the shores of the Upper Niger, and has concluded with him a treaty that runs about thus: He gives to the negro king four pieces of cannon and a thousand flint-lock guns, to which he adds an annuity of twenty-five thousand francs a year. For this booty Amadon grants to the French the right, to the exclusion of all other nations, to found factories or trading stations in all the empire of Segou. They may improve the roads and open other commercial routes on the Upper Niger, which shall be under the exclusive protectorate of France, from the source of the river down to Timbuctoo. The French will, moreover, have the right to navigate the Upper Niger, and establish posts on its banks; and at Segou there will be a French commissioner resident as protector of the French protectorate. Amadon signs all this, and as proof of good faith he sends one of his ministers to return with the mission, which is now on its way to Senegal, and will soon arrive at Saint Louis on the coast, if it is not already there.

THE minority of the Free Church Assembly of Scotland have sent forth the following protest against the action of the Assembly in the case of Prof. W. Robertson Smith: "We, the undersigned ministers, office-bearers, and members of the Free Church of Scotland, feeling deeply grieved by the action of the last General Assembly in the case of Professor W. Robertson Smith, and feeling that, by our continued membership in the Free Church, we may be regarded as consenting thereto, desire to make the following explanatory statement of our position: 1. We loyally hold and maintain all the principles of the Free Church of Scotland, and more especially its principle of spiritual independence, and therefore we declare that any ecclesiastical wrong done by the Church must be set right only by the Church itself. 2. We cordially adhere to the reasons of dissent against the finding of the General Assembly of Thursday, May 26th, read by Professor Bruce on the floor of the house, viz: 'We dissent from the finding of the Assembly: (1) because to appoint and declare that Professor Smith's tenure of the chair shall cease is inconsistent with the terms in which he was appointed to it, inasmuch as no charge has been regularly proved or formulated against his life or doctrine. (2) Because this act is a violation of the Scriptural principles of discipline, and implies an assumption of power which is not merely ministerial, but lordly and despotic. (3) Because besides removing Professor W. R. Smith from his chair, it also deprives him of ecclesiastical rights and powers distinct from the function of teaching.' 3. We pledge ourselves by all lawful means to do what lies in us to maintain the ancient constitution of the Church violated by last General Assembly. 4. We also declare that the decision of the Assembly leaves all Free Church ministers and office-bearers free to pursue the critical questions raised by Professor W. R. Smith, and we pledge ourselves to do our best to protect any man who pursues these studies legitimately."

THE "Nonconformist" says. In about another month, by favour of the Registrar-General, we may hope to get a summary of the main results of the recent census. Much irregular information has, by local means, already leaked out, in which many of the metropolitan parishes have been included. And now we have an unrevised return of London as a whole, as well as the population of some nineteen great English towns as determined by the late enumerations. "London," says one of our evening contemporaries, "holds its own well, as the increase of population is 560,311 in the decade, or 17.2 per cent., while the increase in the population in the whole of the nineteen towns enumerated is 531,287, or 16.5 per cent. upon their previous numbers. This is the more remarkable since, in the preceding ten years, the figures shewed a very different state of things. Then the metropolitan increase was 450,271, or 16.1 per cent., while that of the nineteen towns was 476,239, or 17.3 per cent. The figures, therefore, are reversed, London's rate of increase rising from 16.1 to 17.2, and that of the nineteen great provincial towns falling from 18.3 to 16.5. The population of the metropolis now exceeds by 50,000 that of the whole of these towns together, being 3,814,571, against 3,764,244. Nothing can better give one a just idea of the size and importance of London than this. Manchester and Liverpool, Salford and Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Nottingham, all regard themselves as towns of no mean importance, and yet their united population, together with that of eleven other great towns falls short of that of London. The whole of Scotland has a smaller population than that of the metropolis, and by the end of another decade it is possible that Ireland will also be surpassed. This steady and ever-increasing rate of growth may well give cause for thought, and even for apprehension. So far no evils such as were feared by our forefathers have arisen from the enormous aggregation of people at one centre; but if London is to keep on growing at the present rate of increase, it will have attained dimensions by the end of the next century such as the world has never yet imagined, for it will by that time contain considerably over 12,000,000 inhabitants."