

which should ever be aimed at has been attained, there appears, from the returns upon which this Report is based, sufficient cause for each and all of us to "thank God and take courage." An increasing measure of interest is observable in regard to the Schemes of the Church, and to the management and administration of the funds.

JAMES CROIL, *Convener.*

## Notes of the Month.

Reports have been received from Berlin of the meeting of the Conference of the Old Catholics, and of those who sympathise with them in their movements against the Church in Rome. There were 400 delegates present, numbering among them some of the most influential and highly-accomplished scholars in Germany. There were also present representatives from other countries, including Britain and America. Thousands were drawn together to hear the discussions. Those who expected that there would have been a minute discussion and formal expression of opinion on the various doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, and on the principles of her government, have been greatly disappointed. The object of the leaders in this movement would seem to be to preserve the Catholic Church as it existed previous to the Œcumenical Council which lately met in Rome. They desire to remain as they were, and hence they call themselves the "Old Catholics." Having taken the stand they did against the absurd dogma of the Pope's Infallibility, it would have been well if they had resolved to enter into a review of her whole history—into an examination of her doctrines and principles of government; and, taking the Scriptures as their standard, re-model the Catholic Church as she existed centuries before. The fact that the late Council went astray, should leave it open as a question for fair discussion, if others did not before it. There was, it is true, a very decided opinion expressed by some of the delegates against enforcing the celibacy of the clergy, and against oral confession of sins to the priests. On these points, however, no formal expression of the voice of the Conference was given. Holding to the principles and doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church of 1869, they regard as of the very utmost importance—as essential to the very existence of the church, that apostolic succession should be preserved among them.

Having no archbishop or bishops by which they can preserve the necessary link, they have associated themselves with a Catholic Church in Holland, which can trace apostolic succession. This branch of the Catholic Church has been disowned by the hierarchy in Rome. Here, however, the Old Catholics, in their emergency, have found the necessary link wherewith to preserve that sacred bond of union with the Apostolic Church. No definite course has been resolved on as to the future, save that every effort is to be made with the German Government to induce them to recognize in the party of this movement the true Catholic Church, in preference to the church in Rome. It was urged that such a concession, on the part of the Government, would be a great inducement for the priests in the country to associate themselves with the movement, and the people would unquestionably follow them. They would then claim the property which is now in the hands of the church. It is doubtful whether Bismarck will agree to such a policy. He has not favoured a connection between Church and State. If, however, the church in Rome should continue to exercise the power which she claims to interfere with the internal affairs of his government, he may find it expedient to adopt this suggested policy, with the hope that it would lead to the expulsion of the papal clergy. The new church thus organized, would be the German Catholic Church.

The French in the Province of Alsace-Lorraine are showing their extreme dislike to German rule and authority by emigrating. Although the German Government has been doing everything to conciliate them, they have not become reconciled to their circumstances. A law was passed by which they would not be compelled to come under the military system of Prussia, and other regulations were made which it was thought would, to a certain extent, satisfy them. It was all in vain. It is now provided in law that those who emigrate will be allowed as non-residents to retain possession of their real estate. The border cities on the French side are overwhelmed with the multitudes which swarm from this province. The President of the United States lately sent a telegram to President Thiers congratulating him on the progress of Republicanism in France. The river Po has recently overflowed its banks, and has done immense damage in the provinces of Mantua and Ferrara. Whole towns and villages have been flooded, and thousands of families have been left homeless and destitute. Relief has been forwarded from every part of Italy.

The question of disestablishing the Churches of England and Scotland is agi-