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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THERE is a depraved appetite for scandal. It pays to print the stuff. Swift-footed village gossip, more than half a lie, and the more false it is, will call at every house in a day. In the city, the newspaper supplies the lover of slanderous reports, if the editor is mercenary or mean enough to print such items. Like death, "slander loves a shining mark." The better the man, the more honourable and useful his career; the higher his position, the more attractive the scandal relating to him. The more one-sided and unfair the slanderous assault, the more it is relished. The market for such ware is large, active, and constant.

THE movement begun by the educational institutions and free libraries to secure the admission of untaxed literature for educational uses at least has gained strength within the last few weeks. An important meeting, presided over by Principal Dawson, was held in Montreal the other day. It is gratifying to see the unanimity of opinion prevailing. The anticipated opposition of the book trade has been groundless, the publishers expressing their belief in the reasonableness of the request for the free admission of books and maps for the use of schools, colleges, and public libraries. Enlightened men like educationists and publishers can patriotically rise above self-interest and prejudice.

AS was feared, the subsidence of the western floods is likely to be followed by widespread sickness. A physician who has journeyed through the afflicted district reports the discovery of frequent cases of pneumonia, bronchitis and catarrhal fevers, caused by exposure and wettings, while hundreds of people were found huddled together in warehouses and public buildings under the most unfavourable sanitary conditions. The slime and debris left by the floods, together with the fact that the water has covered, and in many places still covers, wells, cisterns, cellars and cesspools, induce grave apprehensions of a pestilence, the force of floods themselves was expended chiefly upon property. Their after effects bear directly upon human life. It is a mistake to suppose that the sinking of the waters terminates the necessity for charitable assistance.

THE burial of F. G. Stebbins, who was for twenty years editor of the Cuba (N.Y.) "Patriot," has caused a sensation in Western New York. Stebbins was what might be pronounced an "Ingersollite." For years he had been dying of consumption, and for months past had brooded over his approaching dissolution. Prior to his death he exacted from his family a promise that no minister of any denomination should be allowed to hold religious services over his body. He was a member of the Knights of Honour, who attended his funeral, and who, when following his remains to the grave, sang "Marching through Georgia," repeating the song as the earth fell upon his coffin. On leaving the cemetery they sang "Good-by, My Love, Good-by." Inexpressibly dreary and sad! Would the heart of humanity exchange the grand old words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life," for such mockery of death?

IT is in the fashionable and wealthy Episcopal churches usually that the ritualistic craze blossoms most profusely. Aesthetic ecclesiastical decoration and ceremony have a profound significance for the initiated, and for those unversed in mediæval cobwebs, who cannot discern the profound significance in the colour of an alb, the show strikes the senses and awakens a degree of dreamy pleasure. When, however, pronounced ritualists boldly advocate antiricular confession their attitude of hostility to evangelical Christianity becomes pronounced. Mr. Whitcombe in Canada has his counterpart in Cleveland, where the superlative minister of an aristocratic church—so it is described—says: "When I was ordained the bishop laid his hands on my head and said: 'Whose sins

thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained.' These words are the promise of Christ to the apostles." Of whom Rev. G. W. Hinkle modestly assumes he is one.

THE New-York correspondent of the Montreal "Gazette," the tone of whose writing would not necessarily lead to the belief that he was an ardent upholder of the temperance cause, says: "It is the flaring, pretentious 'corner' liquor store that does the damage, where fiery whiskey and other alcoholic decoctions are sold, ale nearly as strong as the whiskey, and scarcely any lager beer. I know of one of these dens on 10th Avenue, in a wretchedly poor neighbourhood, which made for its proprietor \$20,000 last year on sales of \$45,000, or nearly fifty per cent. profit. The customers of this place are men whose average earnings when in work do not exceed \$1.50 per day. The fellow who keeps the place can scarcely read and write, yet out of the hard earnings of, say, 200 poor wretches he wrings an income more than twice as great as that allotted to the Secretary of State of this great nation of fifty millions. These are places that decimate the people with poisonous liquor and fill the city with widows, orphans, and beggars." This testimony is not open to the suspicion of being presented by partizanship.

THE Washington Pastors' Union sent a delegation to present an address of sympathy with the Malagasy envoys in the present state of affairs in Madagascar. To this address the chief Ambassador, Ravninahitrimarivo, responded, and, in a voice and manner indicative of the deepest feelings, said: "Your words are true, gentlemen, respecting the condition of things in Madagascar at the present time. For, if the intention of France to invade the land of our forefathers be carried out, it will not be the Malagasy people only upon whom the calamity will descend, for it will fall upon that which is of more value even than our lives. Civilization and religion cannot be separated from our cause, and they both will suffer in the attack. The French seek to pluck us up as tares because we will not grant them greater privileges than those which other nations are contented to receive, but they cannot uproot us without uprooting the wheat also. The Island of Madagascar is our land by gift of God, and the French have no more right or claim upon it than they have upon the United States. In speaking to you, our Christian friends, we frankly confess that our present prospects almost discourage us entirely in the paths of enlightenment. If the policy of France be the outcome of the white man's civilization, then it were better for us to remain in ignorance. There are only too many in our land who wish to do that already. And so we trust that the Christians' hearts of this great Republic will oppose with all their strength the outrage with which we are threatened. We thank you for the kind expression of your sympathy, and wish you life and the favour of God."

THE ninth annual meeting of the directors of the Home for Incurables was held in the institution at Parkdale. The secretary's report showed that an elevator had been placed in the building, through the kindness of the late Mr. Michie; a fire escape had been provided; that the late honourable John McMurrich had been successful in relieving the institution of its floating debt; and that the library had been enlarged. There were at present fifty-nine inmates in the Home, of whom thirty-five were women and twenty-four men. Thirteen deaths had occurred during the year, and six patients had been removed by their friends or returned to their families. The subscriptions and donations during the year had amounted \$3,467.38, an excess over those of last year. The treasurer's statement showed that the disbursements had amounted to \$5,337, in addition to which \$500 had been transferred to the building fund. The balance on hand was \$848. While the subscriptions had increased \$700 the expenditure had increased \$1,100, owing to the additional number of inmates. Appropriate tributes of respect to the memory of friends of the institution who had been removed by death during the year were paid by several of the gentlemen

who addressed the meeting. The Mayor said very justly that it was evident that the institution had worked its way into the affections of the charitable public of Toronto. The class for whom it is provided is a most deserving one. Christian and humane feeling should prompt the placing of increased means at the disposal of the directors for the extension of the comforts of the Home to those whose exclusion is compelled for no other reason than that its accommodation is already taxed to the utmost.

REV. C. E. WHITCOMBE, an Episcopal clergyman, preached a sermon in St. Catharines lately on Confession. The preacher explained what he understood to be the doctrine of the Church of England on private confession. He would remove three main misconceptions which had grown up unchallenged in the minds of many of the children of the Church, thus: The Church of England utterly repudiates what is known as compulsory confession. 2. The Church of England in this matter robs no man of the liberty with which Christ hath made us free. 3. The Church of England recognizes fully the immediate responsibility of each individual conscience to its God. Mr. Whitcombe urged upon his hearers to carefully distinguish between compulsory and voluntary confession; the latter was the doctrine of the Church of England. The doctrine of this subject of the reformers is embodied in the Book of Common Prayer. What we ask for, he said, is simply liberty to use private confession—liberty of the members of the Church to demand of the ordained priest of the Church an exercise on his behalf of the ministry of reconciliation. This form of confession is to be enforced on no man. In the name of liberty of conscience, so much vaunted in this age, let every soul who seeks this aid do so without fear of the sneers and persecution of others, who often say, in practice, "I do not go to confession, therefore you shall not." The preacher again and again declared that what he asked for is liberty of conscience. Thus do ministers in the Church of England endeavour to head the drift Romeward. In the sacred name of liberty of conscience it is sought by the erection of the confessional to impose upon it one of the most debasing and enslaving abuses of the Romish system. If God's ear is ever open to the penitent, where is the need of bowing to priestly usurpation?

WEEKLY HEALTH BULLETIN.—During last week cold winds have generally prevailed. Along with these we notice the coincident fact that, while amongst diseases of the respiratory organs Bronchitis has stood its ground, Influenza has rapidly advanced in degree of prevalence, and Tonsillitis in area of prevalence. Pneumonia seems on the whole to have slightly decreased in degree of prevalence. Neuralgia and Rheumatism seem to have maintained to a large extent their previous position both in regard to area and to degree of prevalence. Intermittent fever remains in three districts as one of the six most prevalent diseases, its degree of prevalence has everywhere very markedly fallen. Amongst Zymotic diseases there is none which shows any upward tendency except measles, and this has very noticeably increased. Last week showed it to have made a great advance, while this week has seen it still increase until instead of being 4.5 it amounts to 5.15 per cent. of all diseases. This fact is largely due, however, to its epidemic appearance in one or two localities. Diphtheria, noticed last week as having decreased in prevalence, still remains at a comparatively low point in degree of prevalence. Scarletina, although recorded as occurring here and there in the Province, has this week fallen from amongst the twenty most prevalent diseases. Smallpox, to which attention was drawn last week, has fortunately, to all appearance, been localized, as no further instances of its outbreak have been recorded. All will notice with pleasure the step taken by Toronto in appointing a city Health Officer. It is to be hoped that this appointment is but one of many which will be made by municipalities during the coming year, and that the good effects of such appointments in the restriction of contagious diseases will yearly become more and more manifest.