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Notes of the Week.

It is well known that for some time private conferences have been going on between representatives of the three great Presbyterian bodies in Scotland. They have now been brought to a close, and it is understood that the printed account of the proceedings may be expected to be issued almost immediately. The conferences have resulted in ascertained agreements regarding the Reformation and Revolution statutes and the spiritual independence of the Church. The obstacle as to Disestablishment remains the great perplexity, but it is believed that some proposal has been made by the members of the conferences belonging to the Established Church in favor of federation of the three Presbyterian Churches with a view to union.

A Free Church Extension Scheme is now on foot in Glasgow, and at the last meeting of Presbytery Rev. Robert Howie submitted his report upon the progress made. Mr. Howie said it had been decided that the time had arrived when the new building society should be formally constituted. There were in the society 70 directors, 50 of whom had qualified in virtue of contributing £100 and upwards. As regarded the fund, so far as definite promises were concerned, and inclusive of the grant from the Bellahouston Trust, the amount was £22,400 from 181 subscribers. He took no notice of many indefinite promises. The report was considered as satisfactory as in the circumstances they could expect. They did not, however, mean to begin operations until they got the necessary £30,000.

Sir William Harcourt, addressing a large meeting, declared, amid great cheers, "We have not abandoned the cause of temperance. The bishops may be bowed out by the Prime Minister when they go to him with their Temperance Bill. They will retire gracefully when they are shown the door, so long as they are guaranteed in the Establishment, and the palace and the public-house will make merry together. Some people said, 'if they left the thing alone it would right itself; everybody was becoming sober by degrees.'" The other day he was looking at the returns of the Registrar-General, and he found that, comparing last quarter with twenty years ago, the number of deaths from chronic alcoholism was more than double. That did not look like progressive reform in the matter of temperance."

Within the past few years a great deal has been written and spoken upon the necessity of Bible study in the college curriculum. Men of prominence who are not Biblical specialists, as William Dean Howells and Chas. A. Dana, have publicly deplored the prevailing ignorance of the Bible among college men. Examinations held from time to time to discover the amount of knowledge possessed by college students and graduates, have revealed a lamentable amount of ignorance of the contents of the oldest and most wonderful book in the world. Even theological students have in many cases been found not to be so well versed in the knowledge of their Bible as they should be. Do not these indisputable facts furnish an argument for the regular reading at least of some portions of the scriptures

every day in our public schools, since facts clearly show that in a vast number of homes they are wholly neglected?

The comfort and health of the thousands of young ladies employed in stores and shops ought to be a matter of interest to all. Arrangements which could often easily be made without in any way impairing the efficiency of their service are often neglected simply for want of thought. Steps have been taken by means of an appeal, signed by the Duchess of Montrose and Lady Munro Ferguson, to bring the subject before the leading retail firms in Glasgow and Edinburgh. It deals with the long hours of standing behind the counter, and the physical strain thus entailed on women shop-assistants; and appeals to their employers to provide seats behind the counter, so as to enable the workers to take an occasional rest. It recommends spring and revolving seats, which have been invented for this purpose, and would obviate all difficulties arising from want of space. The ladies feel assured that if the leading firms adopt this plan their example will be widely followed.

The movements of Her Majesty are a matter of supreme moment to very many who busy themselves with that kind of news, but they are more or less of interest to most of her subjects. While on the Continent it was her intention to go to Coburg to be present at the marriage of her grand-daughter, and there to meet the Emperor and Empress of Germany and the Empress Frederick. The Queen, it is thought from the necessity at her advanced age of husbanding her strength, has given up going to Coburg. Accordingly the Kaiser and his wife go to visit the Queen. It will be, says a contemporary, "the first meeting of the Kaiser and his royal grandmother since the former's interference in the Transvaal trouble, which brought upon him the denunciation of all classes in England, but as the emperor has long since made his peace by letter and telegram, it is not thought that his hasty action will be adverted to except perhaps in a kind of parental chiding way."

An unusual suit, and one which will enlighten a gullible and voracious public as to how despatches are cooked for it in war time, in some instances at least, and how far they can be relied upon, has been brought by the London Times against the Central News Agency. The Times charges that the despatches regarding the Japanese war which were supplied by the Central News were in some cases entirely fabricated, and in other cases largely altered and expanded, and that by publishing them the Times suffered in reputation. It was shown by comparison with the original cable messages that to the Times and its other clients, including the news agency in the United States, more than 25,000 words of padding had been supplied and paid for by the Times at the rate of \$1.50 per line. By way of illustration and evidence it was shown that the following original cable despatch of two words, "Wei-Hai-Wei captured," was expanded at great length, and purported to give the most graphic details of the capture of that port by the Japanese. Other instances were given of similar work. Such, it was shown, was the way in which the columns of news were read at the time with such avidity were manufactured, "founded upon fact," as the novels say.

The Transvaal, the Boers and Matabeles are again attracting a large amount of the public attention in Britain, and an impression very generally prevails that the end is not yet. The *Literary Digest* referring to the subject says:—"Many English papers declare that this defeat has only retarded the annexation of the Transvaal for a while. The *Chronicle*, Newcastle, a paper circulating very widely among the British bourgeois all the world over, says: 'There is a prospect at no very distant day that the Transvaal will pass completely under the rule of what is now the paramount power, and when that takes place Dutchmen will require to suit themselves to the altered situation. The kind of government the Dutch delight in simply prolongs the reign of monopoly. It is, therefore, not astonishing that those who dislike monopoly have grown restive under Paul Kruger. In too many instances his firmness proves to be obstinacy.'

A very striking illustration of the difference in temperament, spirit and conduct of two peoples has lately been given in the way the British and Spaniards respectively have acted, under what must be regarded as the provoking action of the government of the United States. Of course allowance must be made for the difference of relation between these two peoples and those of the States, but yet it fails to account for the difference. When the President sent a provoking, not to say insulting message to Congress, proposing uncalled for and unnecessary interference in Britain's difference with Venezuela, it was received with pain and grief, but without noise or tumult. The same Government expresses sympathy with the Cuban insurgents and all classes in Spain are roused to hot words, and the masses to loud threats and deeds of violence against anything representing the United States among them, consulates, the flag, and Ambassadorial residences; and yet, had it come to blows, which may God forbid it ever should, it is well known how differently the quiet, cool people would acquit themselves from that of the noisy, blustering, loud but cheap threatening one.

The tide of excitement among our cousins across the line over their quadrennial presidential election, which, for the time, seriously interferes with every other concern, and has been slowly but steadily growing, is now rapidly rising. The political platforms to be built call for a good many planks, chief among them being the money plank, and both the honest, patriotic leaders, and the wire-pullers and demagogues, are taxing their brains and their ingenuity how to get the planks in so as to make the platform secure, and at the same time so attractive as to catch the greatest number of votes. As with ourselves also the forces of the two great parties, Democrat and Republican, are somewhat divided and the chances of battle made more uncertain by reason of other parties dividing their forces upon other than what are regarded as the main issues. The names so far most prominently mentioned are, for the Democratic nomination, Carlisle, Secretary of the Treasury; McKinley of McKinley Bill fame, and Speaker Reed, Republican; while in the Prohibition Party, it is said, there are ten party leaders who are possible Presidential candidates. All any wise man would as yet say is, "We shall see what we shall see."

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

The Occident: We have been confident that the Salvation Army could not continue in its present compact form much beyond the natural life of its founder; its despotic character is against it.

The Bible Reader: A hungry man will not pick his bread to pieces to analyze it, but there are some men who let their souls starve while they are leisurely engaged in analyzing the strong meat of the Word.

Golden Rule: Fret not thyself because of unjust critics, join not their ignoble ranks, correct their untrue statements, if necessary; but, above all, ever refute them by the noble actions of a noble life.

Westminster Teacher: God's way of answering our prayers is always the best way. Paul asked that his painful trouble might be taken away. But the answer was "No." It would have been an unkindness if the Lord had taken it away.

The Christian Index: God counts no one present in His house or at the throne of grace if the heart is absent, and no one absent there if the heart is present in love and longing. With Him, presence and absence are simply questions of the heart.

The Bible Reader: The Bible covers the whole range of Christian experience so completely that if we will read all parts of it we will have our attention called to every part of our life, so that in nothing can we unconsciously fall behind.

Oliver Wendell Holmes: "I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving; to reach the port of heaven we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it—but we must sail and not drift, nor lie at anchor."

Presbyterian Witness: We are fully alive to the importance of the Manitoba school question. Our own ground throughout has been non-intervention with Manitoba. We see no cause to change our ground. On the contrary there is much to confirm us in the conviction that we are right.

The Outlook: National honor is not a conventional or artificial thing. It is a fine sensitiveness which grows out of a noble thought of a nation about itself. It is not a blind, arrogant, unscrupulous forcing through of a policy which has once been inaugurated. It is not a stupid refusal to learn a lesson when the lesson has been taught.

Presbyterian Messenger: There are many different ways of estimating the prosperity of a church, but any true estimate must take into consideration the great purpose for which the Christian Church exists. Any institution is entitled to be regarded as prosperous just in the degree that it accomplishes the purpose for which it was brought into existence, and, in order to determine whether a church is really prosperous, we need to have a definite idea as to the purpose for which it was instituted.