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Notes of the Week.

SPAIN has been stricken by recurring earthquakes, and Switzerland and Italy in the neighbourhood of the Alps have suffered from avalanches. Whole villages in Piedmont have been crushed beneath masses of descending snow and ice. Several hundred lives have been lost, many wounded, and a number of those who escaped with their lives lost all they possessed and are in most destitute circumstances.

It has been decided at Cambridge no longer to confer the degree of D.D. upon bishops as such. In future bishops will only receive the doctor's degree at Cambridge on giving evidence of having published theological works of value, or of being otherwise exceptionally proficient as theological scholars; and this degree will rather represent theological learning than ecclesiastical rank. An exception has been made in favour of bishops in England. The bishop in Central Africa was the last under the old system.

It is noticeable that the crime of forgery is on the increase. At the Assizes in Toronto last week there were several cases tried in which forgery and embezzlement were the crimes charged. In several of the cases testimony to excellence of previous good character was offered. It is sad to see those who have had early advantages, and enjoyed the confidence of their friends and employers, abuse the trust reposed in them. Is there not too much reason to deplore the light and flippant way in which dishonesty is regarded by many who profess better things. Has there not been a great deal too much expressed and implied laudation of a dishonest trick, provided it savoured of that universally admired virtue termed "smartness."

At the re-opening of the Normal School last week, the Minister of Education, the Hon. G. W. Ross, presided. Mr. Kirkland, the lately appointed principal, delivered his inaugural address. It was both thoughtful and practical. Many excellent hints were given to the students, not the least valuable being the importance of mental science, as a means of intellectual discipline, and the importance of religious knowledge as a means of spiritual and moral culture. "It is at least doubtful," said Mr. Kirkland, "whether the mere acquisition of secular knowledge has any tendency to mitigate the vicious elements of human nature, further than to change the direction and type of crime." These are wholesome words and their correctness is amply borne out by observation and experience.

In the *Monthly Notes* of the Y. M. C. A., of New South Wales, the editor says it is a great mistake to imagine, as many people in Britain do, that if a young man is dissipated he will be reformed by being sent to Australia. "A more fatal error was never cherished. The temptations of these southern cities are bad enough in themselves, but away from the restraint of home and friends a young man yields to them sooner than under ordinary circumstances, and few indeed are the cases of reformation brought about in this way." The same holds true in Canada and everywhere else. If a young man desires to rise from his dead self to better things he must determine to have done with dissipation wherever he may be. It is not so much change of scene that is required as change of heart.

GUELPH is the first city in Ontario to adopt the Scott Act. Its friends and opponents have been active for weeks in preparing for the issue. It is a much easier matter to carry the Act in a rural constituency than in a city or town. The supporters of the liquor trade can more easily combine their forces and secure a greater measure of support than is possible in a county. A number of the Guelph ministers took an active part in support of the Scott Act, preaching on the subject of temperance, and speaking at meetings in favour of the Scott Act. They have their reward in seeing the triumph of the principles for which they so earnestly contended. The people of the Royal City evidently took a keen interest in the question, the vote on the Scott Act being the largest ever polled there. The majority in its favour was 169.

THE following series of Sabbath afternoon lectures, for the second term, on Questions of the Day, in connection with the Presbyterian College, Montreal, will be delivered in the David Morrice Hall. Roman Ruins as Witnesses to the New Testament, Sir J. W. Dawson, C.M.G., LL.D., etc., Principal of McGill College; Natural Religion Insufficient, Rev. N. MacNish, B.D., LL.D., Christian and Current Socialism, Rev. J. Awde, B. A.; Science and the first Article of the Apostles Creed, Prof. Alex. Johnson, LL.D., McGill College; The Demonology of Scripture, Rev. J. McCaul, B.A.; Critical Theories of the Life of Christ, Rev. E. F. Torrance, M.A.; The Trilogy of a Famous Philosopher, Rev. A. B. Mackay; Anti-Semitism its Causes and Cure, Hon. Judge Torrance, M.A., B.C.L.; The Resurrection of Christ, Rev. R. F. Burns, D.D.

THE *Christian Leader* says that the committee on Dr. A. S. Muir's case made a preliminary report to Edinburgh Presbytery last week. After detailing the questions put to Dr. Muir and his answers, they said: "Apart from all questions of doctrinal error, it appeared to them that there was so much of what was unbecoming and foolish in the sayings and doings of Dr. Muir while dealing with sacred things in the pulpit and elsewhere as to amount to a very grave offence." A long address was delivered by Dr. Muir, which he had previously advertised as "Pleadings With My Mother the Church." His answers were characterized by Macaulay as those of a Romanist. Dr. Muir specially pleaded for the use of "the crucifix," and said he "felt his conscience burdened in having the responsibility of the Presbytery on his shoulders." The committee are to report fully to next meeting when the case is to be disposed of. On Christmas Day Dr. Muir preached twice to small audiences in St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Glasgow, and so, he says, commemorated "the glorious birth of the Son of Mary."

PHILANTHROPY is more than a pleasant pastime for good-hearted people. It can stand the test of these matter-of-fact times. It pays. In discussing the twenty-fifth annual report of the New York Children's Aid Society, the *Sun* shows that the operations of this and kindred societies have done much to diminish the criminal population. This report of the Children's Aid Society is therefore justified in attributing the remarkable decrease in crime during the last quarter of a century largely, if not chiefly, to charitable and reformatory efforts among the boys and girls of the city. These children have been taken out of the streets and either sent to homes in the country or watched over in the many institutions for their benefit which have been established here by private charity during that time. The work of that sort done by this particular society is only a small part of the whole, and yet it has been very great. In its lodging houses over 250,000 boys and girls have been sheltered and partly fed and instructed, and in its industrial schools more than 200,000 girls have been taught, during the last thirty years. Since 1853 the society has also sent to homes outside of the city 74,179 boys and girls.

AFTER a trying desert march, the British force under General Stewart encountered a large number of

the Mahdi's followers near Abuklea. The disparity of numbers was great. The force under the banner of the False Prophet is said to have numbered from eight to ten thousand, while General Stewart's command did not exceed fifteen hundred men. The result, however, showed that the contest was not such an unequal one after all. It was the obsolete contending with the modern style of warfare, force against science, the primitive spear and target against the last invented weapons. It was the conflict of nomads against thoroughly disciplined and well officered soldiers. It was the fitful enthusiasm of a superstitious people against the invincible perseverance and courage of the Anglo-Saxon. A large number of the Mahdi's followers were among the killed and wounded. Considering the numerical odds against them, the British loss as reported is remarkably small, though officers of distinction were among the killed. The dashing soldier, Col. Burnaby, who undertook the venturesome ride to Khiva, and who described it so graphically, is numbered among the slain.

A SHORT time since Canon Liddon made a reference to a pointed rebuke to profanity by Sir Robert Peel. The London correspondent of the *Liverpool Mercury*, referring to the incident, says it occurred at the table, of a son of a peer, now himself a member of the House of Lords. There was a young man present whose ribaldry reached a height which nowadays would not for an instant be tolerated under any respectable roof. Sir Robert rose and left the room. He did not ring the bell and call his carriage, for it was too early in the evening for his carriage to be there; he left the room. His host, rising and following him into the hall, asked him if he were ill. "No," replied Sir Robert, "but I cannot sit any longer and hear that young man's conversation." "Come back and I will stop him," said the host. "No," rejoined Sir Robert, decidedly, "I cannot sit in an atmosphere polluted by that young man's presence." And he departed in an ordinary cab. Though that young man was a rising politician on the same side of politics with himself, though he had many parts and attained great weight, Peel never associated him in any of his governments. His neglect made a bitter enemy of him, and he was pursued by him to the end of his days. That young man was Mr. Benjamin Disraeli.

IN an able lecture on "Assyrian Monuments and their Relation to the Bible," delivered at the last regular monthly meeting of the Montreal Presbyterian Sabbath School Association, at which Mr. James Croil presided, the Rev. George H. Wells said: Among things which had been found in the palace of Sennacherib were the remains of a tile library, which it was supposed contained at that time—some 500 or 600 years before the Christian era—about 10,000 volumes, and among these were works of history and scientific research. On several of these tiles was recorded the history of the flood very similar to that given in the Book of Genesis. These remains testified to the authenticity of the Bible in many ways, and the lecturer illustrated this by quoting passages of Scripture. An instance of the convincing character of the proof thus given was to be found in the passage of the Old Testament which referred to King Hezekiah sending to King Sennacherib thirty talents of gold and 300 talents of silver. Now, among the ruins of the palace of Sennacherib had been found inscriptions which gave a detailed history of the life of that monarch, and among others was a reference to the fact of Hezekiah giving these very thirty talents of gold and 300 talents of silver to Sennacherib, the difference in the silver being probably explained by the 500 talents being corn and the remaining 300 talents of silver plate, on which the corn was carried. The history of the taking of Samaria and the carrying away of the Israelites into captivity was also written upon these stones, written, too, by men who probably never had any interest in the Hebrews. All this, he remarked in conclusion, led us to believe that in the Bible there was the greatest possible accuracy after all.