

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Vol. 23.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28th, 1894.

No. 13.

Notes of the Week.

The death of Dr. Nevius, of the American Presbyterian Mission, is a great loss both to that Mission and to China generally. To quote *At Home and Abroad*, "he was a prince among men," and since 1853, when he first went to China, has given ungrudgingly of his very best—physically, socially, intellectually, and spiritually—for the uplifting and enlightenment of that vast empire. He will be sadly missed.

The Chronicle, the organ of the London Missionary Society, says:—"The speech which Mrs. Isabella Bishop, F.R.G.S., delivered at the Gleaners' Union Anniversary in Exeter Hall, not only produced an indelible impression upon all privileged to hear it, but is reaching a vastly wider circle through the Press. The C.M.S. has published it as an 8 pp. leaflet, with the title, 'Heathen Claims and Christian Duty,' upwards of a hundred thousand copies of which have been issued in response to definite orders. Other societies also, both here and across the Atlantic, are reproducing the speech. A more forcible description of modern heathenism as it is one could not have."

Some information has at last reached this country with regard to the burning of the Great Mosque in Damascus. The catastrophe took place so long ago as October 14th last, but for some reason or another the Turkish authorities have stood in the way of the facts becoming known. The Mosque was the ancient cathedral of St. John the Baptist, and it contained one of the four copies of the Koran deposited by the Caliph Othman in the four chief Moslem cities. The Koran has been destroyed, but the library otherwise is intact. It is said that the "rebuilding of the Mosque is now being carried out in a way which recalls the work on the great cathedrals of the middle ages." Even ladies of position are insisting on sharing in the manual labour.

Bishop Hirth of the Roman Catholic Mission in Uganda is finding it desirable to circulate the Scriptures. He writes:—"After much hesitation, I have concluded that it is necessary for us to print the New Testament, which the Protestants are spreading everywhere. The chief reason is that we cannot prevent our people from reading it—everybody wishes to know how to read for baptism—except women and old men. We are therefore preparing an edition with Notes from the Holy Fathers." One can appreciate the bishop's trouble when one hears that in June last eighty-nine boxes were despatched from London containing 1,511 complete copies of the New Testament, 5,170 volumes containing the four Gospels and the Acts, 496 books containing St. Paul's Epistles, and 25,880 separate copies of the Gospels and Acts.

The Free Church of Scotland *Monthly* says of the Cunningham Lectures which Dr. Hugh Macmillan has just been giving: "Dr. Hugh Macmillan ought to have felt gratified by seeing, day by day, such large audiences gathering into the Assembly Hall to hear his lectures. The weather was almost always exceedingly unfavourable, storms of wind and rain making it difficult to walk through the streets. But, notwithstanding, numbers came invariably, and the need for resorting to the Moncreiff Hall never arose. His subject was an interesting one—Biblical Archæology—and his treatment of it (as might have been expected from such an accomplished man of letters) was highly attractive. The book, when it appears, will be read with avidity, because the lectures were so crowded with facts that it was difficult to follow them; and, we may add, it will be greatly valued, inasmuch as all that was said was confirmatory of the Bible records. In this respect characteristic, Dr. Macmillan's lectures were in striking contrast to those of Professor Pfeleiderer, whose rationalism was sadly conspicuous."

Lord Rosebery, Gladstone's successor in the Premiership, is a comparatively young man, being only forty-seven years of age. He is of an ancient Scottish house which takes its name from the estate of Primrose, in Fifeshire. He was educated at Eton and at Christ's Church, Oxford, at both of which institutions he ranked high. It is said that both Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone regarded him even in youth as one of the brightest and most promising young men in Oxford. His father never became Earl, but died in 1851. The present Lord Rosebery had only attained his majority in 1868 and was about to seek a seat in the House of Commons when his grandfather died and he became a member of the House of Lords. He at once identified himself with the Liberal party. An aristocrat by birth, he is a democrat in principle, and the general opinion seems to be that he will make a very suitable successor for the great Mr. Gladstone.

One of the guarantees of continued peace in Europe is said to be the aversion of the present Czar of Russia to war. We are told that during the Russo-Turkish campaign, when he witnessed the unutterable suffering of the wounded and dying on the battlefield he solemnly resolved that during his reign there should be no war if he could prevent it. The recent commercial treaty ratified between Germany and Russia seems to be a sort of pledge of peace between these two of the chief combatants in any probable European conflict. In these latter days when the engines of death are so nearly perfect in their destructiveness, and when the nations of Christendom are united by such far-reaching and vital commercial relations, war is not a thing to be lightly undertaken. The great nations with their great armies shrink from such a catastrophe. May it not be that we are approaching the time when, on account of the very perfection of the military art, wars shall be made cease unto the end of the earth?

The great lottery which for so many years had its headquarters in New Orleans was a fruitful source of demoralization to the whole of the United States and far beyond. Since it has been declared illegal it has been trying every possible means to evade the law and prolong its baneful work. It sought to establish itself in Florida, at Port Tampa, but it does not seem likely to succeed in its new home. The postmasters at all the principal American cities along the Canada border were last month forbidden by Postmaster-General Bissell to certify money orders payable to anyone connected with the lottery company and directing that all registered letters addressed to the company should be returned to senders stamped as fraudulent. The Postmaster-General has also issued an order directing that no mail for Honduras shall be sent to Tampa, even if specially addressed via Tampa. All such mail must be sent directly to New Orleans and thence to Honduras. This will upset the plans by which the lottery company has been evading the law.

The British consul at Jerusalem has sent home a report on the Jaffa Railway. It is about fifty miles in length; it passes some twenty towns and villages with a combined population of 100,000; and its construction cost only £6,800 per mile. If the new railway projected between Beyrout or Damascus and Suez is carried out, Palestine will be placed in contact with all the world. The railway will run along the coast, and have branch lines at various points into the interior. One clings to the hope that sooner or later the Jews will be gathered again into their own land. But in the meantime it is natural to ask what may be the nearer result of the opening up of the country, and it is worth while to recall the fact that Laurence Oliphant speaks strongly of the capabilities of the regions beyond the Jordan, and urges their colonization. For one thing, he says, "there can be little doubt that the Dead Sea is a mine of unexplored wealth, which only needs the application of capital and enterprise to make it most lucrative property."

For some time past the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union has been preparing for presentation to the different governments a monster petition against the liquor and opium traffic and against legalized vice. It has grown until it bears now over two million individual signatures, and with the attestation of certain societies, not less than three million. In order to present this an around-the-world-demonstration is to be organized, a first-class steamer to be chartered, and a party of one hundred persons, it is said, will accompany Lady Henry Somerset and Miss Willard in the presentation. The plan is to begin with the United States Government next October. They will then go to Great Britain, having a grand demonstration at Exeter Hall, London, on November 1st. Italy will be the next point, where it is hoped that both the Pope and the King of Italy will receive the delegation. Greece, Jerusalem and Cairo will then be visited. It is intended to reach India in time for the National Congress, and great mass meetings will be held in all the principal cities. From Calcutta they will go to Ceylon, Australia, China, Japan, etc.

About one hundred years ago bankruptcy and the intolerable burdens of over-taxation precipitated the French revolution. The fear of bankruptcy, caused by the keeping up an army on a war footing in time of peace, necessitates in Italy taxation hardly less oppressive than that under which the French people groaned in the reign of Louis XVI. The defect in the Italian treasury for the year lately ended was \$30,000,000, and the only thing which the Chamber of Deputies or the Minister of the Treasury has been able to do toward relieving the situation has been to make some slight attempt to curtail public expenses, and to vote a new taxation by which it is hoped to meet one half of the deficit. In the meantime to maintain its standing as a member of the triple alliance the army must still be kept up, and a deficit for the new year is accumulating. The people, ground to abject poverty, show signs of resistance and even revolt. An uprising in Sicily has but recently been quelled. In Italy, as elsewhere in Europe, the most threatening danger seems to be not a conflict of nation with nation, but an uprising of the oppressed and downtrodden classes against their rulers. In Italy it seems scarcely possible for the present unnatural conditions to continue much longer without a crisis which might mean the overthrow of the present order of things and the present form of government.

On a recent Sabbath morning, at the close of his forenoon service in the Free High Church, Edinburgh, Rev. Dr. Walter C. Smith took occasion briefly to refer to his contemplated retirement from the pastorate of the congregation. The subject had long been occupying his mind, and he had been compelled to think that he was no longer fit for the work with its increasing burden. He had striven with all his heart to do as well as he was able, and the work in consequence had suffered through his long delay. He had thought at one time that he might have been able to continue for a little while longer with a colleague-assistant, but he had been forced to the conviction that the right course was to do what he had done. He took the step in the interest of the congregation. He thought that if a man, frankly looking at himself and his position, found that he was no longer able to fill that position, he ought to put himself out of the way in order that someone who was able might occupy his place. That was what he had been anxious to do on behalf of the congregation. He had no wish to lead an idle and easy life, and he hoped, if God spared him, to be of some service to the congregation and to the church. If they loved him, as he believed they did, let them hold fast. He would do everything in his power to facilitate a settlement, and they would soon get a man who would bring more strength to the work, so that they would be blessed in the future as in the past.