

his little hatchet; perhaps the story of a child who fell into the fire; perhaps the old narrative of the heathen mother throwing her child into the widely-opened jaws of an abled-bodied crocodile; sometimes an old yarn which has been spun over and over again for twenty years; sometimes an empty novelty which has been inflated for the occasion. Whatever it is, the risk is that it is more entertaining than instructing; more calculated to tickle the fancy of the children than to feed them with the truths of the Gospel. Some fine singing (from which the idea of *praise* is accidentally omitted) fills up the time; a collection is taken, a sort of fly-blister stimulus having been applied to the liberality of the children; they go home with a sort of confused idea that they have heard something, and that they ought to be better for it; and the missionary day comes no more for another month.

The anniversary day is to the monthly exercise as the sun is to the moon. The children and their friends are dazzled beyond measure by the glittering bill of fare which is provided. The school is trained in singing for this occasion for four months, spending each Sunday half an hour or more of the precious time which ought to be spent in teaching. This might not be so bad in itself, if the young singers were taught to praise God in the singing; but the object of the singing is to make the children sing so as to please the congregation which shall be gathered to hear them. It is as when fiddlers practise in order to fiddle well at a concert, or when bears and ponies are trained for a circus exhibition. The juvenile dialogue and speech business receives its share of patronage. Children who had better listen to the wise discourse of some good man, are stuffed, almost to bursting, with a speech or speeches. The exercises are prolonged, sometimes receiving the addition of a tedious or bombastic "report," until they are about three times as long as they ought to have been; and when at last children, parents, and admiring friends go home, it is either with a sense of great weariness, or with that uncomfortable feeling of mind which is akin to the feeling of body caused by overeating at a great dinner or at a tea-party.

The school is full; more than full, it is crowded. "Evidence of great prosperity," says somebody. Very prosperous, indeed, is the condition of the boat whose boiler is so overloaded with steam that it may explode at any moment.

It is hardly necessary to speak of the style of teaching at this institution of learning. Suffice it to say, it is meagre, poor, inefficient. No child learns a great deal. The teachers are not very well up in their lessons, and soon get through their work. Beyond the mere routine of asking questions out of the question book, not much is done. That is empty and barren business. Seed may be sown in that way, but the crop will be like the straggling spires of grass which shoot up between the stones of the street pavement—sparse and weak, liable to be destroyed by the first footstep.

Now comes along a grave somebody, who shakes his head wisely and says:—"There, I knew all that; that is just what all Sunday-schools are—mischievous in their tendency, ruinous in their results." Stop a moment, good sir. This is only the "high-pressure" Sunday-school. Admit that this kind of school is mischievous and dangerous, and then what? Admit that a steamboat boiler does explode—what of it? Shall we reject the whole steamboat system, and carry out yet further our view of safety by refusing to ride on the railroad, because there is an occasional smash-up? Walk, or go on horseback, sir, as your forefathers did (only take care that you do not stumble, and that your horse does not throw you), but let us have all the modern improvements in conveyance, if you please. When the engine gets too hot we cool it off a little, and run it under less head of steam. When our Sunday-school runs too much into the jovial things of this world, and neglects its high mission, we need not abolish the school, but turn its energy in a proper direction. It can be done. It has been done. It needs to be done in many instances where the Sunday-school is suffering from a mere worldly prosperity, with an absence of much of the real means of grace.

Brother of the high-pressure school, look out for your boiler! Tame the concern down a little, or prepare for an explosion.

## OUR NOTE BOOK.

THE new Pope, Leo XIII., late Cardinal Pecci, elected Feb. 20, is sixty-eight years of age. He is of patrician birth. He is an effective speaker, and his reputation as a scholar, a theologian, and a poet is high. His private character is said to have been "singularly pure," which is

very satisfactory, but scarcely worthy of mention in the case of one who is assumed to be so highly exalted above erring mortals. It is said, also to his praise, that Cardinal Antonelli was his enemy. He was created Cardinal by Pope Pius IX. in 1853. He is the 25th Pope.

A memorial to Robert Raikes, who is said to have been the founder of Sunday-schools, is proposed. It is suggested that a million of pennies should be raised.

The Evangelical Alliance propose to erect a hall to seat 600 people on a piece of ground which they have secured near the principal entrance of the Paris Exhibition. It is intended to hold a series of "International Conferences," as well as other religious meetings in this building. The Christian Evidence Society also will have two series of lectures in the building—one in French, and the other in English—which will afterwards be published.

The health of Dean Stanley, who has for some time past been ailing, has seriously given way. Recently, during the delivery of a lecture at Union Chapel, Islington, he was unable to proceed, and Dr. Allon accordingly read the MS. More recently, having engaged to preach at St Botolph's Church, Aldersgate, before the Lord and Lady Mayoress, he was forbidden by his medical advisers to fulfil the engagement, or for the present to take part in any public function.

Mr. C. H. Spurgeon, after a sojourn of some weeks at Mentone for the benefit of his health, which was much impaired, is so much better that he has returned to England and resumed his pastoral duties.

There is still great distress in South Wales. An average of about 3,000 persons weekly have received out-door relief at Cardiff, in addition to whom large numbers have been in the receipt of private charity.

Miss Marianne Farningham, who is well known as a graceful writer, and is highly in favour with young people, has frequently appeared of late as a public lecturer. Her subjects are homely in their character. Her voice and her delivery are alike good, and she holds the attention of her audience to the close.

The famine in China, it appears, from a report laid before Parliament, has been equal to that of Southern India, if not greater in extent. While thousands have died of starvation, many have sold their wives and children to obtain the means of living.

Uproarious Sunday meetings have been held in Hyde Park. Attempted "peace" demonstrations have been frustrated; the Premier has been waited upon at Downing street, and has received an ovation of stentorian cheers; while Mr. Gladstone's house has been attacked by a mob, and several windows broken. And yet peace has been signed! And these "demonstrations" have taken place in the "Metropolis of Christendom"!

At a meeting of the Indian Famine Fund Committee, held at the Mansion House on Monday, March 11, it was reported that the total amount received then reached £513,522. Half a million had been transmitted to Madras. Distress still exists, and may continue for some weeks in certain parts, but the Madras Government have made arrangements to meet it.

Donkey riding on Sundays is to be abolished on Hampstead Heath, and any person using the stands on that day will be liable to a penalty of forty shillings. The nuisance having grown so intolerable of late, the Metropolitan Board of Works have taken action in the matter, and are resolved to enforce the penalty.

The success attending the establishment of a Bible stand at the French Exhibition of 1867, was so great that it has been determined to secure a plot of ground opposite one of the entrances of the forthcoming Exhibition, where a stand will be opened. It is expected that there will be a still greater gathering of people from all parts of the globe than upon last occasion, when the circulation of the Scriptures, either bought or given away, occasionally reached as many as 40,000 copies per day.

The latest invention is the Phonograph, or a talking instrument. The machine has been shown both at the Royal Institution, and at the Society of Telegraph Engineers. Though the articulation of the instrument is not so clear as could be wished, the words are recognisable. The vowel sounds are well produced, but the consonants are not very distinct. As yet the invention is in its infancy, and is capable of much improvement.

The Home Renison Society has held its first meetings at Ipswich. The Bishop of Winchester is president, and its members and officers are composed of members of all denomi-