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## Notes of the Week.

The government of Cape Colony, South Africa, says a recent clerical traveller in that country, treats clergymen of all denominations in the most liberal manner. Any minister who can produce his certificate is allowed to procure a return ticket at a single fare. This arrangement makes it much easier for the ministers of South Africa to attend their annual Assemblies.

The Rev. John MacNeil, the Australian evangelist, as a protest against the manner in which certain congregations of the Presbyterian Church in that country, are setting at nought with apparent impunity, the instructions of the General Assembly on the matter of gambling in bazaars, has tendered to the Assembly's Committee his resignation of his commission as Church evangelist.

A biography of the late Professor Blackie has just been published, which contains as might be expected, a great deal that is both interesting and racy. It tells us that he was a great admirer of Principal Fairbairn. The professor was present at the opening of Mansfield College and he wrote, "Fairbairn is a man for thoroughness of culture and largeness of view, I fancy, not inferior to the most accomplished of the pedagogic dons here, and superior to most."

The following is frank criticism of a writer who just now is supposed to carry everything before him. The *London Times*, having announced in a Saturday edition, that it would on Monday publish a poem of Rudyard Kipling, naturally excited some expectation and no doubt swelled that day's circulation. When the verses appeared, says a writer in the *British Weekly*, "they were miserably disappointing, dull, thumping, jingo doggerel without a single felicitous word or phrase, and without even an approach to poetry."

The following extract is given from a letter of Professor Blackie in his biography which has just appeared:—"In the evening I found myself in Lord Rosebery's new house with a grand array, or rather a snug select committee of Gladstonian Liberals, including the G. O. M. himself and his lady, also Lord Aberdeen and his lady; Principal Donaldson, Arnold Morley, the Liberal whip, and a few others. The G. O. M. looked quite well but discoursed rather too seriously about various matters, Popery and French novels, both unlovely subjects, to which unseasonable seriousness I put a pleasant end in the drawing-room, by singing at the express request of Mrs. Gladstone and mine host, 'The Bonnie House o' Airlie.'"

The sitting at the present time of a commission in Washington to consider the question of damages in the case of the Behring Sea seal fishery as between Britain and the United States, and the fact that that has come to be the recognized and accepted method of dealing with difficulties between these two great and kindred people, is really an object lesson of incalculable value for all civilized nations. It cannot but be felt by all thinking people, how much more rational it is that misunderstanding should be settled in that way, or by that of friendly meditation, than by angry words, fiscal retaliation, or worse than all, by an appeal to the sword, in which millions of money would be worse than thrown away, and thousands of lives needlessly sacrificed, to leave behind mutual hatreds which in their turn are a source of injury and danger, without very possibly, after all, arriving at a rational solution and settlement of existing difficulties.

The extent to which South Africa is coming to the front and the exciting attractions of gold and diamond mines, are strikingly illustrated by the statement of an English clergyman who has just returned from that country. On board the vessel in which he sailed there were over five hundred persons, the majority of them seeking their fortune in the Transvaal. Among them were a hundred Russian Jews driven away by the despotism of their native country. There were also a hundred Cornish miners going out to work in the famous mines of South Africa. Many of these were strong and devoted Methodists, who, as a body, are keenly alive to the interests of Methodism in that country. He speaks in the highest terms of South Africa and its people, and believes there is a great future before it.

Although it is not easy to see how it can be avoided, yet one cannot but regret that the H. H. Holmes horrors are all to be again served up to the public. They gratify, and while they gratify help to create a taste for the horrible. The trial of Holmes is now going on in Philadelphia, and as might be expected is exciting the utmost interest, the court room being crowded from day to day and only a small portion of those who wish it being able to get admittance. The extent and keenness of the interest generally felt in this man and in his trial, are testified to by the fact that there has never been so large a gathering of newspaper men before in the history of Philadelphia criminal courts. In addition to representatives of the twelve local papers there are special correspondents present from Toronto, New York, Chicago, Indianapolis, Detroit and St. Louis.

The political atmosphere just now is surcharged with highly dangerous elements. Turkish atrocities in Armenia goading a peaceful people to madness and retaliation. Russia, France and Britain watching Turkey, and each other. Russian scheming and intriguing in China, for commercial advantages and territorial, which, if true, Britain and Japan could not tolerate; British ultimatums to Ashantee and Venezuela, and complications threatened with the United States, and general uneasiness on many accounts, if newspaper reports are to be believed, in many countries, present an array of difficulties, complications and jealousies, which if all were peacefully settled would allow people to breathe more freely, and demonstrate that the thirst and readiness to go to war which once prevailed does not do so now, which, should events prove to be the case, will be a most welcome augury of peace for, let us hope, years to come.

The *Occident*, a Presbyterian paper published in San Francisco, intimates to its readers a course of popular lectures to be given in that city by the professors of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary and pastors of churches in the city under the auspices of the Young People's Association of the Presbytery during the fall and winter. They will be given in the central churches of the city so as to bring them within reach of the largest number. The subjects treated will be as follows: "Old Testament Literature," "On the Formation of the New Testament Canon," "The Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church," "Presbyterian Doctrine," "Presbyterianism and Its Relation to Modern Thought," "Presbyterianism and Modern Life," "Why I Am a Presbyterian." Why could not this same plan be adopted in Toronto and many of our larger towns as well as cities? This work could be done by clergymen and laymen in such a way as to be both most instructive as well as interesting.

The Rev. Andrew Murray, whose visit to Toronto a short time ago was so greatly enjoyed, has two brothers besides himself in South Africa, the Rev. Charles and the Rev. William Murray, both of them prominent ministers in the Dutch Reformed Church, and men of great influence in the colony. The former has some magnificent vines at Graaf Reinit, one of which is said to rival the celebrated vine at Hampton Court.

An important convention lately held was that of Provincial W. C. T. U. in Knox Church, Hamilton. The attendance of delegates was larger than ever before, and it is not necessary to say that Hamilton's welcome was of the most cordial kind possible. It requires these gatherings to present a full and complete view of the work such organizations are doing for the good of the country and its wide-reaching scope. Reports were given we may mention, by way of illustration of this, upon work for sailors, for our volunteers, amongst our Indians, in prisons, and for the police, upon the use of unfermented wine at the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in Bands of Hope, upon Sabbath observance, upon purity in literature, art and fashion, upon social purity, hygiene and heredity and other subjects scarcely less important. We cannot have too much of such work and no portion of the community can do that work better, if so well as women can do it. It is work in which nearly all will wish them abundant success, and be willing to lend a helping hand in. For as was well said at the convention the women of the W. C. T. U. are not seeking political, municipal or social power, but to protect their homes, and trying to make their influence felt in work for the Master. They are educating public sentiment, not for high license or local option, but for prohibition. The success of the past year, which has been greater than ever before, we hope will be exceeded by each succeeding year, as nothing but blessing can come to Canada from such work, and to every country where it is being carried on.

The "Prisoners' Aid Association," which held its annual meeting last week in Association Hall in this city, presided over by Hon. S. H. Blake, is doing a good and most important work for the various classes which it takes under its care, and for the whole country. Its report gives a full account of its work, and agents and office-bearers of the Association are indefatigable and persistent in the work they are doing. During the year the Prison Reform movement has been prosecuted with unabated vigor. The following are some of the objects which it has in view, whose importance and value to society as reformatory agencies no one can dispute: a Dominion Reformatory for Young Men; one or more Industrial Reformatories for Inebriates in Ontario; the distribution of literature in the County Gaol and the County House of Industry questions. Of this 43,630 pages have been circulated. The protection of children is seen to, the classification of prisoners, such as for example: "At the Central Prison, Toronto: (a) Sufficient cell accommodation to afford every prisoner a separate cell, and (b) The erection of a block of isolation cells for the separate confinement of incorrigible prisoners. The adoption of the English system of separate confinement in our county gaols." It recommends also the appointment of a female inspector for female prisoners, a workhouse for Toronto located on a farm convenient to the city for the vagrant class, where this class could be made to do something towards their own maintenance. In this good work the press, Ministerial Associations, the W.C.T.U. and other benevolent organizations lend more or less help, which is gratefully acknowledged by the Association.