

News Department.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 12.

Mr. Lucas moved for a return showing the distribution of the sum of £18,500, voted for the army services of the year 1851 and 1853, under the head "Divine service," stating the religious denomination to which each clergyman belonged; the office, title, and service in virtue of which such allowance was made; the date of his appointment or of the commencement of his allowance, if an annual one; and the names and distribution of the religious books paid for out of the same vote.

Mr. Hastie (Paisley) moved that the following words be added at the end of Mr. Lucas's motion,—“and a copy of each book be laid on the table of the House.”

Mr. S. Herbert had been told by the hon. gentleman that the works were of a very objectionable nature, and could not be held responsible for them. It was recollected that you must either establish a proselytism, or leave the prisoners without religious education whatever. As to laying the books on the table, it was a very unusual course, but in order that they might be left at the war-office for any hon. member who choose to call and look over them. He hoped the amendment would not be pressed, and that the hon. member would not ask for a library to be laid on the table of the House.

Mr. Spooner inquired if the right hon. gentleman meant to say that any religious denomination could circulate whatever works they pleased among the army, because they were conformable to their religion? (Mr. S. Herbert—"No, certainly not.") If the works were objectionable they ought to be stopped. Let the House have a list of the works, and then they could see what was objectionable.

Mr. Hastie said he did not object to the books furnished to the prisoners, but to those circulated in the military schools, which were calculated to degrade the young and tender mind by their superstitions, and affect them in after life.

Mr. S. Herbert said, it was not the fact that works of all descriptions were issued to the soldiers, but only those who had received the sanction of the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church (Mr. Spooner—"Without control?") No; certainly not without control. The books used in the schools were those of the Irish National Society, and if the hon. member had found a child in possession of any other book it must have been given to him by his religious teacher, and was not purchased by the public money, as in the case of the prisoners' works.

Mr. Hastie was satisfied with the explanation, and withdrew the amendment.

The original motion was then agreed to.—*London Evening Mail.*

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION AT FLORENCE.—The following is the substance of a letter, received by a gentleman in a neighbouring town from his son, relative to a lecture delivered last week by Captain Trotter, at Greenwich:

"I went last week to a lecture by Captain Trotter, one of the deputation who visited Italy to procure the liberation of the *Madiai*. He said that although they had been released, there were hundreds also imprisoned for reading the Scriptures, and gave us some interesting facts respecting this state of things in Florence.

"Three times the deputation solicited an interview with the Grand Duke, and were each time flatly refused. The Earl of Roden endeavoured to ascertain if the Bible could be purchased in Florence, (as one of the great arguments of the Roman Catholics is that the circulation of the Scriptures is not prohibited, and that you may see the Bible exposed for sale in the windows of booksellers in that city); in only one shop could a copy be found, and that in ten ponderous volumes, the price of which was £6.

"In Florence the police have power to throw any person into prison for eight days on suspicion; and if three Bible-readers be found together, they may be captured and severely punished, even as the *Madiai* were.

"Captain Trotter mentioned one instance of a dying man with whom a gentleman sat up till midnight, until the arrival of the physician, when the police entered the room and carried off the doctor and his friend, and put them in gaol, because three Bible-readers were found together.

"A child of eight years of age, in a dying condition, entreated his parents to send for a reader of Scripture before he died. The reader feared to go, lest his usefulness might be hindered elsewhere; but the urgency

of the child's parents prevailed. He consented—spoke to the child—met the priest on the stairs as he left the chamber—and in two hours the police seized the dying boy, took him away, and his family never heard more of him.

"Still the readers have much encouragement. A gentleman had 900 Bibles he wished to introduce into Florence. He hired a beggar to carry in four a day. All but eight were safely deposited; but the beggar, having been hitherto successful, was detected by the police at the gate with them on his person. He lost the books, made his confession of the person from whom he had received them, and was liberated.—He returned to his employer, who assembled three or four persons who passed that day and night in prayer, in great suspense—the visits of the police being usually by night—also the next day and night, and a portion of the third day were devoted to prayer, when one went to make enquiries, and it appeared there had been eight police at the city gate; and having heard so much about these forbidden books they began to read, and were soon so much interested they determined to keep each a copy for themselves.

"Another instance of the carefulness of the Lord over his praying people was related, in which a person had fifty or sixty copies of the sacred volume in his house; when a friend ran into the room saying the police were outside. The master of the house said, 'Let us pray.' His friend assured him they would be on them in a moment. 'Never mind,' was the reply; and rising from his knees, said, 'Now go and fetch a porter.' At this time two police were at the gate, but when returning with the porter no police was there. The books were removed to a place of safety; and while these good men were thinking they had mistaken the intention of the police, suddenly the house was filled with them, a large reinforcement having been sent for in order to prevent any escape. After a most diligent search from garret to cellar they gave up the pursuit.

"Such are a few facts brought forward by Captain Trotter to elucidate the state of Florence under the rule of him who has made himself in the eyes of the world so notorious for the persecution of the *Madiai*.

THE SEARCH FOR SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.—The departure of the *Isabel* screw steamer for Behring's Straits, furnishes another proof of Lady Franklin's devotion to her husband and his companions, and of her zeal in carrying out measures for their rescue. It is due to the Admiralty to state that they have rendered some assistance in the equipment of the *Isabel*, and that this vessel will be towed by a Government steamer as far as the Isle of Wight. The heavy expenses however of provisioning and storing the vessel, with a part of the crew—fifteen in number—is defrayed by Lady Franklin. The *Isabel* is provisioned with every requisite for her long voyage. Mr. Kennedy hopes to reach Vancouver's Island with his stock of fuel. There he will take in a fresh supply—that island having valuable coal mines on the north eastern side, about fifty miles from the chief settlement of Fort Victoria. He will also take in a stock of dried beef and vegetables. His provisions include an abundance of various anti-scorbutic and preserved meats and vegetables. Mr. Kennedy will sail on temperance principles, taking with him only such a quantity of spirits as may be necessary for medical purposes. His first object will be to communicate with Commander Maguire, at Point Barrow, which is 600 miles beyond the entrance to Behring's Straits. If he succeed in effecting this, he will, should the sea be sufficiently open, make his steam power available in any manner that may be deemed most desirable for prosecuting the search for Sir John Franklin, and for the Captains Collinson and McClure. To this paragraph we may add, that the enterprising Arctic traveller Dr. Rae, leaves Liverpool this day (Saturday) for New York, from whence he will journey as fast as possible to Lake Superior, and thence by canoes to the North American shores. He hopes to be able, by dint of long marches, to effect his proposed exploration this summer, and if he discover, as we think he will, a continuity of water between Bellot Strait and the passage between America and Wollaston and Victoria Land, he will have discovered a North-west passage; not in all probability a passage practicable for ships, but water communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to the north of the American continent.—*London Athenæum, April 9.*

Mr. S. M. Peto, M. P.—There was a divine who used to say when preaching to the youths of his congregation; "beware of being golden apprentices, silver journeymen, and copper masters; and with a like motive it may not be useless to mention that Mr. Peto the

builder worked three years at the bench, used the trowel for a year, and passed the remaining three years of his apprenticeship at the mason's banker. When he was little more than twenty-one he uncled died, and left his business and his capital jointly to him and to Mr. Thos. Grissell, also a nephew. Their first work was Hungerford market, their second the new Houses of Parliament—afterwards placed wholly in the hands of Mr. Grissell. They built the Reform Club House, the Oxford and Cambridge Club House, the Model Prison at Clerkenwell, and other large structures; the St James's Theatre was completed by them in thirteen weeks. They also entered very largely into railway works, and to these after the dissolution of partnership Mr. Peto confined his attention; we may mention more especially the Eastern Counties line, the line from Ashford to Folkestone, the Southampton and Dorchester, the Oxford and Birmingham, and in conjunction with Messrs. Betts, the whole of the great Northern line north of Peterborough. When we say that there were employed on his works at one time ten first class locomotive engines, 2300 waggons, 916 horses, and 14,800 men, some idea may be gained of their great extent, and of the energy and power required to keep all well in hand. There are many excellent traits recorded of Mr. Peto, but for none does he deserve more honour than for his continued and enlightened efforts to raise the character of the large bodies of men engaged under him.

The British Government has sent to Mr. Crampton, the British Minister, a gold medallion likeness of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and a gold pocket chronometer for Capt. Nye, of the steamship *Pacific*, and a gold mounted trumpet and ten pounds sterling for the mate, and ten pounds for each of the six men who volunteered their services and saved the crew and passengers of the British bark *Jesse Stevens*, wrecked some time since. The presents are to be distributed through the State Department.—*Am. paper.*

On Saturday last a number of ladies and gentlemen assembled at Stafford-house for the purpose of enabling those who promoted the "Women's Address on Slavery," and others interested in the subject, to welcome Mrs. H. B. Stowe to this country, and to give expression personally to the respect and admiration which are felt for that lady. The Duke of Sutherland having introduced Mrs. Stowe to the assembly, an address was read and presented to her by the Earl of Shaftesbury, to which Mr. Beecher, brother to the lady guest, replied, and read a letter on the subject of emancipation from Mrs. Clay, who had been selected to receive the address. After partaking of refreshments, the ladies who were present congregated in one of the splendid saloons apart; and Mrs. Stowe, seated between the Duchesses of Sutherland and Argyll, entered freely into conversation with her numerous visitors.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England have lately published their fifth report, the main points of which are as follows:—In addition to the five sees now subjected by act of Parliament to fixed incomes, the Bishops of Salisbury, St. Asaph, Ripon, Ely, and Worcester, have consented to receive only the income prospectively annexed to their sees; the Dean and Canons of Durham have in like manner been limited, the Dean and Chapter of York have agreed to an arrangement of similar scope; 99 reversions have been sold, and 77 leaseholds purchased. The value in fee of the property thus enfranchised during the past year exceeds £550,000; the total charge upon the common fund, in respect of 825 augmented benefices, and 235 new districts and parishes, amount to £77,976 yearly, or a capital sum of £2,598,700; and, in consequence of such liabilities already incurred, over 1500 applications still remain unsatisfied.

The several items, added to those we gave last week, may help us to some idea of the prodigious life and strength there is in the Church of England. That all these vast means of Church extension should still lag so much behind the growing wants of the nation, we hardly know whether in this there be more cause to grieve or to rejoice. Heaven bless our noble Mother the Church of England!

THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN.—The report of the Trinity College commission has been at length completed, and will be laid before parliament. It is stated that some discussions took place at the recent sittings of the commissioners, as to the expediency of altering the statutes, with a view of opening scholarships and certain professorships to Dissenters and Roman Catholics. There was a diversity of opinion on this subject, some of the commissioners having been favorable to such a change, while others, including the Archbishop of Dublin, were adverse to any interference with