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ECCLESIASTICAL NOTES.

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE EXAMINATION.—Since 1874 there has been an annual examination of candidates, known as the Oxford and Cambridge Examination for Holy Orders. It is conducted under the direction of a council consisting of the Professors of Divinity and two graduates in Divinity from each University, and an Examining Chaplain, nominated one by each Bishop who accepts the results of the examination, the list now including the entire bench, save two. The examinations are held twice a year, and at points convenient for candidates. Successful candidates are arranged in three classes, but usually those who obtain only a third class are required to pass another examination. This examination is upon the contents of the Bible, the Creeds, the Articles, the Prayer Book and special subjects assigned each year, and Hebrew is optional. Doctrine, pastoral care and the question of personal fitness are left to the several Bishops. The results of the twelve years' work of the council are very encouraging. The average of general culture and theological acquirement has steadily risen, and the impulse given to the study of Hebrew is quite remarkable.

RIPON STYLE.—The close of the year was marked at Ripon by the ringing of muffled peals on the cathedral bells, and by the holding

of watch services at Trinity Church and other places of worship. After midnight the cathedral bells rang out merry peals, and the city was alive for some time with carol singers.

WAKEFIELD BISHOPRIC.—The Wakefield Bishopric Fund has been completed. In October last the Bishop of Ripon announced that he had received an offer of 5,500l. from "A Friend" for the fund, to complete the movement, provided that the public would contribute a like amount by the end of the past year and on New Year's Day the honorary secretaries of the fund announced that they had received 5,529l. 15s. 7d., and are consequently in a position to claim the proffered gift. If now only remains for the unpaid donations to be paid in, and should the treasurers be able to invest the whole amount at a rate of interest approaching 3½ per cent., they will speedily be in a position to hand securities to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for 2,700l. per annum; an income which, together with the annuity of 300l. from the See of Ripon, will produce a minimum endowment contemplated by the Act of 1878 for the new Bishopric of Wakefield.

THE OLD CATHOLICS.—The long controversy between the Old Catholics and the Government of the Canton Lucerne, is approaching a conclusion. The Federal Assembly decided on December 7th, by 88 votes to 43, that the Old Catholics are entitled to the use of a church, and though some delays may yet be interposed by the Lucerne Government there is no doubt that in the end the Old Catholics will attain their object. This significance of the victory consists in the fact that this is the first Old Catholic congregation which has been formed in the Roman Catholic Cantons, and that other towns have been waiting to see the result of the struggle at Lucerne before taking action for themselves. The Old Catholics are naturally elated at this, the most important success their cause has gained since 1874.

ORDINATIONS IN IRELAND.—In all 46 priests and 49 deacons were ordained by the Irish Bishops during the past year. The Divinity School of Trinity College has been exceptionally large, and many candidates for Holy Orders were obliged to seek them in the English Church, the demand in Ireland not nearly exhausting their number.

ST. GEORGE'S, BELFAST.—The handsome parish church of St. George, Belfast, was reopened on Christmas Day after thorough restoration, when the effect of the improvements was very visible. The chancel is especially handsome. The chancel of this church, and that of St. Bartholomew's in Dublin, are now the finest of their kind in the buildings of the Irish Church.

GROWTH.—The number of confirmees in the Diocese of Rochester this year has been 12,018, or 1,600 more than in 1885, and 900 more than in 1884, the year in which, as Bishop Thorold says, all the work was at flood-tide. It may be added that in 1878 the number of confirmees in the two London dioceses was 22,478. This year it will probably be 34,000.