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Notes of the Week.

FOREIGN missionaries resident in Japan are now granted passports to reside outside of foreign concessions, on the ground that they are "employed in Church work"—a concession which has hitherto been given only to teachers. Coming at this time it indicates a special appreciation on the part of the Japanese Government of the beneficial influence of the missionaries.

THE New York *Independent* says: The decision of the Supreme Court upholding the constitutionality of the Wilson Original Package Act is very grateful to the friends of Prohibition. The cause has suffered many discouraging defeats, and it is good to know that the principle has been so handsomely vindicated by our court of last resort. "Ye trembling souls fresh courage take."

THE Established Presbytery of Glasgow has just published a report on the social condition of the poor in that city. It recommends the conferring of large powers on the corporation to close insanitary houses and compel landlords to make houses habitable; the formation of an association for the purchase and reconstruction of existing tenements that are insanitary and out of repair; and the compulsory relegation of the incorrigibly idle and dissolute to labour colonies.

THE report of the General Manager of the Dominion Building and Loan Association was presented at the first annual meeting, held in Toronto on the 27th ult. Dr. Burns, the president, in an address, defended the Association from some aspersions to which it had been subjected. The report of the auditors shows that there is a balance in the company's favour of \$15,354.58, and that it holds securities against loans to the value of \$104,200. The Hon. G. W. Ross replied to the vote of thanks to the directors and officers.

THE printing of the Scriptures in the Russian language is a monopoly of the Holy Synod. Russian Bibles printed elsewhere than in the Synod's printing offices are confiscated, should the police hear of their existence. As the Apocryphal books are an integral part of the Synod's Bible, it follows that the numerous bodies of Russian Dissenters, who consider these books uncanonical, are debarred from having a Bible to their liking. Many of them make shift with the Bible in Bulgarian, a cognate language to Russian, which may be imported for the use of the Bulgarian colonists.

WITHIN the last few months the Russian Government have caused more Jews to join the Christian Church than all the Jewish societies that have ever existed. The Russian newspapers assert that over 50,000 Israelites have joined the Orthodox Greek Church within a year, and that many thousands have within the same period embraced Lutheranism. This may all be true. But what are we to think of the means employed to bring this about? What are we to think of a Church who can boast of converts like these unfortunate perjured Jews?

PRINCIPAL RAINY presided and gave a short address at an anti-opium demonstration in Free St. Andrew's on a recent Sunday evening. There was only a moderate attendance. Professor Lind-

say made a telling speech, and Dr. Dudgeon, of Pekin, a very long one, under which the audience showed signs of impatience. Dr. Rainy thinks the loss to the Indian revenue which would result from giving up the opium traffic could be made good by cutting down extravagant expenditure. Principal Rainy, as usual, is the life of the Free Church Assembly. One Saturday, especially, he had several times occasion to pour a little calming oil on troubled waters.

THE series of annual reports which have been presented by Canadian Loan and Insurance Companies has proved the sound financial condition of our country and the rewards which are being reaped by wise investments and business enterprise and energy. That of the Ontario Mutual Life Assurance Company is of the most encouraging kind. The amount of assurance effected by this Company is the really great sum of \$13,710,800, and its cash income at the close of the year was very near to half a million dollars. Its surplus over liabilities was \$134,066. Such reports as that of the Ontario Mutual reflect credit on all concerned.

DR. PROCHET, of Rome, preached to a large congregation in Free St. George's, Edinburgh, recently. He is an eloquent speaker, and his English is nearly perfect. He spoke on the present state of religion in Italy, taking as his motto the saying of Machiavelli: "If we are without religion we owe it to the Papal Court." Dr. Prochet was much shocked at Mr. Stead's idea that the Pope is the Christian conscience. "I have read many foolish things," he said, "but I never happened to stumble across anything quite so stupid. Nothing could show more clearly how ignorant Englishmen are of the real state of matters in Italy."

THE report on religion and morals, which was given by Mr. Sloan in the Free Church General Assembly, and was of great length, contained much that was worth consideration. The conclusion of the committee is that upon the whole, throughout Scotland generally, the tide of spiritual life has been ebbing for some time past. Complaint is made of half-day hearing of the falling off in the attendance at prayer meetings, and of betting, much of which is laid to football. It is suggested that boys of a musical turn be early drafted into choirs, and that cooking classes be started in mission districts, it being clear that much of the indulgence in strong drink is due to badly-cooked food.

ON his recent visit to Smyrna, Mr. Wells, of Pollokshields, Glasgow, preached in the Episcopal Church connected with the British consulate, the clergyman in charge conducting the preliminary devotional exercises, a rare experience for a Presbyterian minister in these days. Mr. Wells also addressed the girls in the American boarding-school at Smyrna, where he found that they and their teachers, by an odd coincidence, were engaged at the time of his visit reading his latest book, "Rescuers and Rescued." Mr. Wells received a visit at Buda-Pest from the Baroness Dercsenyi, who has been a very warm and loyal friend of the Free Church mission in that city for fifty years. She told him that she owes all her interest in Christian life and work to her governess from Edinburgh, whom in her girlhood she regarded as the model of all that is good.

CURIOSLY enough, says a contemporary, Dr. Boyd, the retiring Moderator of the Established Church Assembly, preached at St. Giles on much the same subject as that chosen by Dr. Brown. His text was taken from the same chapter, 2 Cor. iv. 1, "This Ministry." It was rather startling to hear from Dr. Boyd that in Scotland "the men are generally better than the Churches; in England the Churches are not infrequently better than the men." He qualified the remark by saying that in England the churches were so beautiful that it was very hard to be like them. The new Moderator, Dr. Macgregor, of St. Cuthbert's, was warmly welcomed by the Assembly. The addresses, as usual, were mainly complimentary. Reference was made

to the death of Mr. T. G. Murray, who will be greatly missed in this year's Assembly. The chief business of the day was the election of Sheriff Cheyne as procurator in the room of Sir Charles Pearson.

THE report of the College Committee came up in the Free Church Assembly. There was a large attendance of members, but as no important discussion was expected, the public galleries were nearly empty. In presenting his very satisfactory report, Dr. Bannerman raised a cheer by remarking that they hoped soon to do away with the annual collection for colleges. It was felt that the colleges should be entirely self-supporting. Mr. Charles Guthrie, who is one of the best speakers in the Assembly, seconded the motion for the adoption of the report. The Rev. T. Crerar, of Leith, came forward with an amendment. He thought that there were too many professors on the College Committee. Considering the nature of its work, six out of twelve was too large a proportion. Professor Blaikie retires this year, and it was proposed that Professor Duns be appointed. Mr. Crerar moved that some other name should be substituted. He suggested that of Mr. Johnston, of Greenock. A show of hands was then taken, and Mr. Crerar's amendment was lost. About eighty members supported him. The debate lasted three-quarters of an hour.

THE Edinburgh *Evening Despatch* states that the managers of the First Presbyterian Church in New York have resolved to make enquiries about the Rev. John Robertson, of Glasgow, with the intention of giving him a call. "The Church," writes the New York correspondent who communicates the information, "has an interesting history in the city, but of late it has been unfortunate in its ministers, and is at present without one. It is situated near the foot of Fifth Avenue, and was at one time very rich. The wealthy classes, however, have nearly all left the down-town districts and gone up to the more fashionable quarters of the city. This Church, like all the other down-town places of worship, has suffered by the exodus of the rich people, and its financial condition is not so good as it used to be, but still, I think, good enough to tempt Mr. Robertson. The salary is \$9,000 a year. If he can be got it is the Church's intention to make it a great centre for the middle-class of Presbyterian churchgoers, and it is fondly hoped that Robertson will be to New York what Talmage is to Brooklyn. Five out of six of the managers are anxious to have him, and are prepared to go a few thousand dollars extra to get him."

THE report of the Colonial Committee of the Church of Scotland was submitted by Rev. A. Williamson. The income last year was \$23,240. New Zealand is in urgent need of both men and money, especially in the rural districts. Mr. A. Wallace Williamson spoke of the Church in Victoria as undermanned, a fact impressed upon him during his recent visit. Next came the report on continental chaplaincies. Mr. Hunter, of Fala, called attention to the lamentable position of the Church in having only one summer chaplain throughout the whole continent of Europe. After this, says the correspondent of the *Christian Leader*, there appeared delegates from the Presbyterian Church of Canada, Dr. Burns, of Fort Massey Church, Halifax, and Mr. Munro, of Antigonish, the former of whom declared that the union of the Canadian Presbyterian Churches, which took place in 1875, had been such a splendid success that they were urged to advise others to go and do likewise—a statement that was followed by applause. In the matter of army and navy chaplains congratulation was expressed over the passing of the Marriage Act, 1890, by which marriages by ministers of the Church of Scotland on board Her Majesty's vessels can no longer be questioned. The report on Aids to Devotion, which was submitted by Mr. Paton, of Dumfries, elicited from Dr. Donald Macleod the remark that the diction of the work was capable of improvement, and that the service was too long. The Moderator tried to comfort him by pointing out that the length was only a half that of the previous one.