

These efforts to remove inequalities of taxation will receive the approval of many. They are not quite so radical as some desire, but they will go a long way in mitigating the growing discontent that tax exemptions have for some time been causing. The adoption of these measures, instead of being an injustice, would be generally recognized as advances on the road to the equity and fairness with which all religious denominations should be treated. Subsidized churches, like subsidized individuals, are, to a certain extent, shorn of their power and independence. Count Cavour was not far astray when he urged a Free Church in a Free State.

### PRINCE BISMARCK'S RETIREMENT.

THE retirement of Prince Bismarck from public life affords another illustration of the common saying that there is no man who is really indispensable. The life of nations goes on when those who have done much to mould the course of events are superseded by younger claimants or removed by the hand of death. Personal influence, commanding ability are important factors in the guidance of national affairs, yet even the greatness of the greatest is limited. Human skill and purpose are overruled by Him by whom kings reign and princes decree justice. German papers with pardonable pride regard the retirement of Prince Bismarck as an event of world-wide significance, as to a certain extent it no doubt is, but it may be devoid of the importance that his most enthusiastic admirers are disposed to attach to the step he has just taken. During nearly half a century he has occupied a prominent place in European politics, and has had not a little to do in shaping the events that have altered the map of that continent, but great and important events will take place in which he will have no share, and powerful as his influence has been affairs will be shaped by other hands than his. The great chancellor has been floated into an eddy by the side of the stream, while the great current flows onward in its destined course. It is perhaps well for his name and fame that he has been relieved from the cares, responsibilities and burdens of his high office while his power has remained undiminished. To him it would have been peculiarly humiliating had his policy of blood and iron been compelled to give way before the forces of the new time.

The chancellor's demission of power and office at the time was by some unexpected. It was well known that he was by no means in accord with the views and intentions of the late Emperor Frederick, but it was generally supposed that the young Kaiser fully sympathized with the experienced minister. There are many evidences that such has not been the case. The young ruler, conscious of the great power he wields, does not turn out to be the plastic personality some expected him to be. As both are masterful men, one had to give way, therefore the chancellor has made his bow and has retired and to the mass of people he will be buried under the title conferred on him. They will hardly know him as the Duke of Lauenburg.

For the last forty years Prince Bismarck has occupied a conspicuous place in European public affairs. He belongs to an ancient and honourable Prussian family, several of whose representatives rose to influential positions in the service of the State. Carl Otto Von Bismarck as a young man studied law and afterwards settled down to the life of a quiet country gentleman. Official position, however, soon had attractions for him and he entered the public service where he succeeded early in making his personality felt. In his political views he was ultra-conservative and a firm upholder of aristocratic privilege. It is said of him in those early days of his career that he believed in absolute monarchy, government by the aristocracy and in the subjection of the people. He stoutly opposed constitutional government. When the revolutionary wave swept over Europe in 1848, he decidedly objected to the concessions to popular demands at first granted by Frederick William III., of Prussia, and warmly approved of their withdrawal. When the grandfather of the present emperor succeeded to the throne of Prussia he at once sent for Bismarck as the man on whom he could depend. Both continued to work harmoniously in promoting the aggrandisement of Prussia. For a time Bismarck was engaged in the diplomatic service, having served with distinction and success at St. Petersburg and at Paris. It was mainly through his instrumentality that Austrian ascendancy in the old German Empire was overthrown. He set about the re-organization of the Prussian army and in a high-handed way carried out his plans in defiance of parliamentary opposition. When by a

majority they defeated his measures he dissolved parliament and kept on dissolving until he had gained his end.

During these struggles he was decidedly unpopular, but he embraced every opportunity of carrying out a vigorous foreign policy. The death of the king of Denmark in 1862 gave the occasion for the settlement of the Schleswig-Holstein question, and it was settled by the arbitrament of the sword. In this way he secured the co-operation of Austria and annexed the greater portion of the disputed duchies to Prussia. About three years later, he forced war upon Austria. It has transpired that it was through his instrumentality alone that the brief conflict that ended at Sadowa was undertaken. The king of Prussia was opposed to it, but Bismarck succeeded in securing the assent of the king. This was a critical point in his career. Failure would have utterly discredited him, but he took the risk and was successful. His next effort was to diminish the influence of France in European affairs, and when he thought the time opportune he forced a quarrel on Louis Napoleon over a candidate for the Spanish throne. The overthrow of the French Empire and the victory of the Prussian arms gave the opportunity for the unification of Germany and the establishment of the Empire. From that time onward Bismarck was the virtual ruler of Germany, and he has all along ruled with an iron rod.

The great German Chancellor was not in the habit of making concessions, but when in his estimation concession was necessary for carrying out his theory of government he never scrupled to yield, even at the expense of consistency. In order to curb the power of those who were opposed to German unity he conceded manhood suffrage by which means he was able to swamp his opponents by the magnitude of the popular vote. In combatting Ultramontanism he took a firm stand and upheld for a time unflinchingly the Falk laws. Even the opposition he had first encountered on this account was strenuously resisted and the attempt on his life by Kullmann in 1874 he boldly charged to Jesuit intrigue. Yet here again he gave way and now the Falk laws have fallen into innocuous desuetude. Nor was this his only effort to conciliate papal influence. The Pope was selected by him to settle the New Guinea dispute. Since the recent elections he has been endeavouring to secure the co-operation of the centre or clerical party to counteract the liberal and socialist elements in the new parliament. Like politicians elsewhere Bismarck was not averse to secure support from the Church of Rome when he imagined it would be serviceable to his purposes.

The removal from office of Prince Bismarck has awakened serious apprehension in many quarters. There is distrust and uncertainty as to the plans and the purposes of the young, inexperienced and impulsive Kaiser. The fear of a great war that has hovered over Europe for years is increased. In any case the task of the Emperor, who will now virtually be his own chancellor, is one of the greatest magnitude. Things cannot long continue as they are. The crushing weight of European armaments cannot be much longer endured. War or disarmament are the only possible alternatives. Which it shall be, a short time will determine. All who believe in a beneficent overruling Providence will hold to the conviction that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that the affairs of men and nations will be so ordered that His kingdom of righteousness and peace shall be advanced.

### Books and Magazines.

SELECTIONS FROM JOHN BUNYAN HIS BOOK, "YE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS." Made by Fanny M. Jessup. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication; Toronto: N. T. Wilson.)—There is a selection for every day in the year. The book is printed in peculiar type called "Outing," and is beautifully and attractively gotten up. Bound in paper.

KNOX COLLEGE MONTHLY. (Toronto: D. T. McAlinsh.)—The *Monthly* aims at the attainment of the golden mean. It is solid without being ponderous and dull; bright and racy without flippancy. The March number opens with a characteristic paper on "Church Union," by Principal Grant, of Kingston. Mr. Laidlaw follows with a timely paper on "The Individual Obligation of the Sabbath." A Cambridge man talks pleasantly of student ways at the venerable institution on the banks of the Cam. Mrs. Wilson, Rev. James Smith and Dr. Kellogg write on missionary subjects, and the Rev. R. S. G. Anderson, of St. Helen's, contributes a poetical gem "The Master Callesth for Thee."

PRAYERS FOR SOCIAL AND FAMILY WORSHIP. Prepared by a Special Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Revised edition. (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons.)—In addition to a carefully compiled series of prayers for family worship there are a number admirably adapted to special occasions. There are brief services for hospital use and for the sick, prayers for use in the sick room, for funerals, children's services, sacramental family prayers, occasional and special prayers, thanksgivings and a table of Scripture readings.

THE TWO SIDES OF THE SCHOOL QUESTION. (Boston: Arnold Publishing Co.)—The claims of the Roman Catholic Church to control national education, if possible, and if not, to establish separate schools and secure for them state support, are put forth with ceaseless persistency in the United States no less than in Canada. This pamphlet contains the speeches delivered at the annual meeting of the National Educational Association at Nashville last year, on the one side by Cardinal Gibbons and Bishop Keane, and in answer by Edwin D. Mead and Hon. John Jay. It is needless to remark that the speeches are able, and present the views of the respective speakers in the best lights possible. They are well worth reading, and will help to give a view of the conflict now waged by the Roman Catholic Church in order to dominate by the capture of the school system wherever it can. The value of the pamphlet is enhanced by the addition of several appendices.

LIFE INSIDE THE CHURCH OF ROME. By M. Francis Clare Cusack, "the Nun of Kenmare." (Toronto: William Briggs.)—The Nun of Kenmare writes clearly and forcibly, and there is every evidence that she writes truthfully. It is the uniform device of the Romish Church to denounce those who leave their communion and tell what they know of the system. It is not so easy now to crush opponents as it was when the "Holy Inquisition" exercised its dread influence, but the arts of modern persecution—slander and vituperation—are busily employed whenever anyone follows conscience and leaves Rome. Malignant shafts directed against the Nun of Kenmare fall harmless. She is sufficiently well known to be uninjured by those who attempt to evade the force of her criticisms by personal detraction. The volume she has recently given to the world is filled with most interesting and suggestive facts, told in a plain, direct fashion, yet at the same time free from exaggeration and sensationalism. The facts she details are chiefly from well-known Roman Catholic sources and can easily be verified. It would do much good were it possible for Roman Catholics to read it, and it contains much that it is important for Protestants to know.

THE UNKNOWN GOD, or Inspirations among Pre-Christian Races. By C. Loring Brace. (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son; Toronto: John Young, Upper Canada Tract Society.)—The able author of "Gesta Christi" has given to the world another and a very interesting volume. In explanation of the position he maintains he says in his preface, "What may be called the 'modern method' in studying ethnic or heathen religion is not, as was once the case, merely to search for defects, or to show their inferiority to the highest religion, but to find what good there was in them; to see how the men of other races and times regarded the problems of the universe." Again, "in this volume the writer has taken for his special theme the words used by Saint Paul in his sermon on Mars Hill, 'the Unknown God,'—words which the great apostle applied also to the spiritual Zeus of the ancient Greeks. The effort of the writer is to show the ancient belief of mankind in the Unknown God, and that the Great Father of all has granted his inspirations to many of very different countries and tribes and races. This volume is in some respects a search for the footprints of the Divine Being on the shifting sands of remote history." In working out this plan there is a degree of uncertainty what the author means by inspiration. He traces the evolution of religious ideas among the races of antiquity and like not a few distinguished Oriental scholars of our time is enthusiastic in his appreciation of the merits of Buddhism, though he by no means ignores its defects. He is not prepared to admit that it is a "false religion" and objects to "certain able writers" who so describe it, among whom in a footnote, he classes Dr. Kellogg, who, he says "has written a learned and vigorous little book on this theme, 'The Light of Asia, and the Light of the World.'" Mr. Brace, it is just to add, speaks reverently of the Divine Personality and teaching of Jesus Christ.