

employed. The disaster will come on life and property, do what we will.

If left to us, none would die; for we always seek to prolong life. And, when our friends die, we say, if we had used this remedy or that, they might have lived. No machines would break, if we had our way. No accidents would occur if we could prevent them.

Al, this human frailty, this innate imperfection in man, which shows itself in all his works and in all his actions, we cannot think of it without a deep feeling of humility: This frailty and death are implied in the text, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." God means to execute the law of mortality in this world. The man of health and strength often falls to the ground in a moment, without any assignable cause. Infancy and age alike perish from the earth. The pestilence walks with deadly tread among the children of men, sparing none. The earth is made to quake by some invisible power, and cities are toppled into ruins, and life and property are wasted with lavish hand. The rains descend from the heavens, and floods are created which sweep away the abodes of men with all they hold dear.

Build as strong as you will, be as careful as you may; and yet, with humanity as it is, and with material things as they are, it can be said truly, "There is nothing sure but heaven."

OUR NOTE BOOK.

THE war-cloud has burst over Afghanistan, and preparations continue to be made. By some means guns and ammunition find their way to the dominions of Shere Ali, and the spark requires but to be kindled and the holocaust will be in a blaze. The price to be paid will be as usual, several millions of money, many thousands of lives, and at least five times as many widows and orphans. In these "latter days" there are still many "men who delight in war."

The autumnal conference of the Church Association has been held at Derby, and was largely attended.

The Baptist Union of Scotland has held its annual meetings at Edinburgh. The Union has just entered on its first decade. When it commenced there were 50 churches in connection with it, and a membership of 3,850. There are now 81 churches, with 8,163 members. In the Sabbath-schools there are 7,670 young people.

The last Conference of the Wesleyan Methodists appointed a committee to consider the best method of relieving the existing embarrassments of various Connexional funds, and providing, as far as possible, against the recurring accumulation of debt, as also of raising the means for the erection of a new branch of the Theological Institution, and for other pressing purposes. The committee met in the Centenary Hall, on Oct. 29, and it was resolved to raise £200,000, to be called "The Wesleyan Methodist Thanksgiving Fund."

Ruth Elliott (by which name she was best known), after a lengthened period of suffering, which did not, however, prevent her from exercising her gifts as a charming storyteller, has died at the early age of twenty-eight years. Miss Peck (for that was her real name) was the daughter of the Rev. W. P. Peck, Wesleyan minister, of Chelmsford. In her tales she always wrote "with a purpose," and she had gained a high place as a Christian novelist. Her remains were committed to their last earthly rest by the Rev. W. Statham, at Abney Park Cemetery, Stoke Newington.

The Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, son of the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, has returned from a lengthened tour in Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania, his return having been hastened on account of the recent illness of Mrs. Spurgeon, which it was feared had assumed dangerous features, which have happily abated. It is stated that Mr. Thomas Spurgeon's success as a preacher during his tour was very great.

The merry peal of St. Paul's Cathedral bells is now frequently heard. They are twelve in number, the total weight being 271 cwt., and the cost about £4 500. They were dedicated by a religious ceremony, the Bishop of London officiating, on Friday, Nov. 1. Many thousands of people assembled in St. Paul's Churchyard and the adjacent streets to hear the first peal, which stirred up the echoes of the greater part of the city.

At the Exeter Diocesan Conference (Bishop Temple presiding) discussions took place in reference to extempore

preaching. A proposal was made to constitute a new order of voluntary lay helpers, who should preach in churches and perform all clerical duties except the administration of the Sacraments. The general tone was in favour of extempore preaching, and against the reading of sermons in the pulpit.

Our Baptist friends in the metropolis are going ahead with their tabernacles. The Metropolitan Tabernacle of course stands pre-eminently. Following in its wake, and either as offshoots, or in some way the result of the great Newington Butts organisation, are the West London Tabernacle, the East London Tabernacle, and now the Shoreditch Tabernacle. Each, however, is a distinct church, and has no connection with the Metropolitan beyond that of the child to its parent—the presiding pastors of each hailing from Mr. Spurgeon's College. The latest, of which the memorial stones have been laid recently, is the Shoreditch Tabernacle. It will cost £9,000, and is designed to seat 2 000 persons.

It is stated that a committee is being formed in Paris with a view to a permanent International Exhibition at the Crystal Palace. French exhibitors are invited to transfer their productions from the Champ de Mars to Sydenham, and thus realise the original idea of the Crystal Palace as a cosmopolitan museum and warehouse.

The American people seem to have given a warm welcome to Dean Stanley. He has mingled with the various religious denominations without restraint, and has shown the breadth of his sympathies by preaching in their pulpits and taking part in their *soirées*. Speaking at a recent meeting at New York, he said he felt the necessity of hurrying back to England to welcome to Westminster Abbey, and to listen there to the sermon of, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland.

After a brief stay in London, where he took an unostentatious part in one or two of the Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken's meetings, Mr. Sankey has gone to the continent for a brief rest before commencing his contemplated evangelistic work in this country.

A thieves' supper was held recently at the Mission Hall, Little Wild-street, Drury-lane. About 250 of the unenviable class who were invited sat down to a sumptuous repast, of which they partook with a heartiness of appetite which witnessed to their enjoyment. Mr. Charley, M.P. and Common Serjeant, presided. The superintendent of the mission stated that during the present year 231 criminals had been taken in hand, 61 of whom were now at work, 56 had been sent to sea, 10 had absconded, 10½ had been relieved with money and clothes, 14 had their fares paid to their native place, while the rest had been sent to the various homes in connection with the mission. The Governor of the City Prison, Holloway, and other prison officials gave addresses, and some reformed thieves bore their testimony to the good being done by the mission.

OUR PROGRAMME FOR 1879.

- A WREATH OF FLOWERS. By EMILIE SEARCHFIELD. Twelve Stories of every day life, each complete in itself. Interesting, without flippancy; earnest, without cant; fearless, without being offensive. healthy, bright, and true to life. Illustrated.
- THE GREAT MEN OF GOD. By Rev. W. F. NOBLE. Biographical sketches of Biblical Heroes, showing God's dealings with them, and their influence on the times in which they lived.
- HOME LIFE. Rev. FREDERICK WAGSTAFF. Short, homely sketches on the social and moral aspects of domestic life, with hints and helps.
- OUR MONTHLY PULPIT. Each number will, as heretofore, contain the substance of a thoroughly practical sermon by some eminent minister.
- SOCIAL SUNBEAMS. By E. CLIFFORD. Short, practical essays on general topics, bearing more especially on the religious side of home life.
- HIDDEN JEWELS. JANET. Thoughts in verse, specially translated from the writings of the best German, French, Swiss, Italian, Danish, Swedish, and Welsh poets.
- FIRESIDE STORIES for the Younger Ones. By ANNA MAY. Twelve short, pleasant stories on subjects that children will appreciate, and written in a style that will readily win their attention. Illustrated.
- THE ANIMALS OF THE BIBLE. Brief, well written articles, abridged from standard zoological works. Illustrated.
- OUR MUSIC ROLL. A new piece of music will be given monthly under this heading.
- MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES. Short Sketches, Poetry, Notices of Books, et.; will be found in every number, and other features will develop themselves as the year goes on.