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Notes of the Week.

The theological seminaries of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States are under the control of the Synods. The last General Assembly of that branch of the Presbyterian Church sent down an overture to the Presbyteries proposing two questions: (1) "Should the Assembly have the veto power in the election of professors?" (2) "Should the Assembly have power to remove professors for unsoundness in faith?"

Following a powerful appeal made a short time ago by the Rev. E. D. McLaren, of Vancouver, on behalf of the poor of the city, and those in want of employment and food, a most practical form of Christianity has been entered upon. On New Year's Day the ladies of his congregation provided a free dinner at which some 80 men were fed and baskets of provisions given to poor families. The same band of Christian workers, as a result of this, has arranged to provide hot soup and bread for any who are destitute every Wednesday evening between 6 and 8 o'clock in the Church, corner of George and Richards Street. Music is rendered by the young people of the Church. At 7.30 the soup which may be left over is distributed amongst any poor families who send for it. Not a few city churches might well take a hint from this and go and do likewise.

Whether it is the prospect of the coming elections casting their shadow before or something else, we gladly notice that some of our ministers are speaking out with no uncertain sound as to the very intimate connection between religion and politics. The Woodstock *Sentinel-Review*, speaking of sermons delivered there on a late Sabbath evening, quotes Rev. Dr McMullen as expressing himself most forcibly on the relation of religion to politics. "In his opinion it was impossible to separate the two. A man was responsible to his Creator for the use he made of his franchise." On the same evening Rev. Dr Mackay, speaking on Christian character, referred in scathing terms to political corruption and municipal boodling. "Those guilty of it were not unfrequently men moving in respectable society and claiming the name of Christian. What a shame that such ungodly hypocrites should be elected to positions of responsibility by the votes of Christians. In the golden age of Rome if a man was tempted to dishonesty he would stand upright, look the tempter in the face and say to him, 'I am a Roman.' He thought that was a sufficient reason why he should neither lie nor cheat. It ought to be a hundred times more sufficient answer to every temptation for a man to say 'I am a Christian, and shall I yield to sin?'"

Mgr. Satolli at a dinner given by the Gridiron Club at Washington took occasion to tell what his mission to the United States is and what it is not. "It is," he says, "to help to teach the ignorant, to raise the fallen, to lead the guilty and the penitent to the invisible and Divine Saviour who alone has power to forgive sin, to console the sorrowing, to edify the believing, to promote righteousness, liberty, sympathy and the spirit of Christian brotherhood throughout the land." "If you want to know," he adds, "what it is not, you have it in the words of a writer in the *Forum* who explains what he thinks it is. He asserts that I am here to further the claims of the Pope to a kingdom of this world, a kingdom which embraces the whole world, all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. In my own name, and in that of Leo XIII., who sent me, I repudiate any such purpose." Mgr. Satolli should know better than anybody else what his mission to this country is and what it is not, and so far we are glad to have information on this point from himself. When, however, there is a final and complete abandonment by Rome of the dream of recovering the temporal power, the loss of which Leo XIII. has again and again bewailed,

we shall expect to get notice of it in some more formal way than in an after-dinner speech at a meeting of the Gridiron Club.

The death of Chief Ardagh, of the Fire Department of this city, adds another and a much lamented victim to our recent fires. So many qualities are required to fill the vacant post, so well filled by him who did it so long and so well, that it will be no easy matter to find a man competent in every way to fill the place. In spite of occasional delinquents, we believe that we have in Canada as many good men filling public posts nobly from a high sense of duty as are to be found in any country. After what we have just seen in Toronto of boodling and boodlers it is refreshing and reassuring to read such testimony to the character of the departed Chief as we find in one of our contemporary dailies, the *Globe*:

An air of gloom and genuine sorrow pervaded every firehall in the city yesterday, as the men sat round the stove, talking in subdued tones of their dead hero. "He was a father to his men," declared one, and a murmur of assent ran round the circle. Continuing, the first speaker told how the Chief was always in the thick of the fight, encouraging the lads, not only with his stentorian voice shouting instructions, but by his actual presence at the point of greatest danger. He would never send a man where he himself hesitated to go. He was every inch a fireman, devoted to his work and ready at any moment of the day or night to risk life and limb in the protection of property or the saving of other lives. The men who have worked under him so many years almost worshipped him. Every word and gesture of his was law to them, and they feel to-day as if an individual and personal loss had fallen upon each one.

Rumors of dissolution of the present parliament and consequently of an impending general election are rife, and the leaders on both sides are seeking the ear of the people and their judgment—and their votes, of course—in the struggle which, should it not be immediate, cannot at any rate be long delayed. Let the struggle be keen if need be, only let it be fair, honest, manly and fought with the weapons of truth and righteousness, and let no fraud, false pretences or billingsgate be resorted to on either side. It is an inspiring spectacle to witness and an elevating exercise for a free people to work out their own destiny, and to advance their national interest and importance by the weapons of fair, sound, honest argument for one side and the other. To be out or in office, though not an unimportant matter for the antagonistic parties nor for the country, is yet not so important as that voters and candidates for office of both parties should be actuated by considerations of what they honestly believe will tend in the highest degree to promote the wellbeing in the highest and best sense of the whole Dominion. The issues involved can never be unimportant, and engaged as we are in laying the foundations of a Dominion which has in it great potentialities and possibilities, they are especially important. Let every citizen of influence, intelligence and character by words and deeds do his utmost to make the coming election the fairest, the most honest, manly and intelligent which has ever taken place in our history.

Pope Leo has issued an important Encyclical to the venerable, the archbishops and bishops, of the Roman Catholic Church of the United States of North America. Nothing could be more wise, or, for the country for which they are intended, more timely than the words of His Holiness on the subject of divorce, and it may well be hoped and believed that by the people generally outside of the pale of the Roman Church as well as by those within it they may be laid to heart and acted upon. On this subject the Encyclical says: "It is difficult to imagine a more deadly snare to the community than the wish to declare dissoluble a bond which, by the law of God, is made perpetual and inseparable. Divorce is the fruitful cause of mutable marriage contracts, it diminishes mutual affection, it supplies a pernicious stimulus to unfaithfulness, it is injurious to the care and education of children, it gives occasion to the breaking up of domestic society, it scatters the seeds of discord among families, it lessens and degrades the dignity of

women who incur the danger of being abandoned when they shall have subserved the lust of their husbands, and since nothing tends so effectually as the corruption of morals to ruin families, and undermine the strength of kingdoms it may easily be perceived that divorce is especially hostile to the prosperity of families and States." Well will it be for our cousins, who are in special danger from this source if these words of wisdom and truth shall receive due weight in the family circle and in the counsels and legislation of the nation.

From the reports of the press the Y.M.C.A. convention lately held at Bellville, appears to have been a success from beginning to end and must have given a decided impulse in the good work to all in attendance, and through them one which will be felt more or less on all the individual associations in the country. It is impossible to notice the many departments of Christian work taken up and discussed in the convention, but one cannot read the reports without being struck both by their wide range and the great numbers reached by these many forms of beneficent activity. Few, we fancy, would be prepared for the statements made by Mr. George B. Hodge, secretary of the Educational Department of the International Committee, as to the great amount and the value of the work done under this one head alone:

The Educational Department of the Y.M.C.A. includes reading rooms, library, literary societies, lectures and evening classes. There are now 850 reading rooms, 800 libraries, 300 evening classes, 250 literary societies; and 500 practical lecturers have been given. It was chiefly of the evening classes that he spoke. These are now being attended by 20,750 young men, to whom is given a thorough course of instruction on 75 subjects, divided into commercial, sociological, industrial, science, language and miscellaneous. The International Committee are now urging specially the industrial and scientific courses, since these fields offer a greater opportunity for remunerative occupation. In these branches thorough architectural drawing and industrial designs are followed, leading toward such technical lines as machine construction, boiler making, carriage draughting, wood and metal working, civil, mechanical, architectural and electrical engineering. The average age of these 20,000 young men is 23 years. Over 200 students have already secured positions, while the salaries of over 150 others have been increased in consequence of the instruction given.

How to bring the largest class of the people into contact with the best books is a most important problem and one not always easily solved. Not many of our towns have as yet succeeded in getting the free library system adopted. A plan is in use in England to accomplish the object referred to, which could very easily be adapted to this country. There the experiment has been made in connection with the National Liberal Club, but it can be readily put into practice apart from politics. What is called a library is a box of books made up in London, and sent to the secretary of any association formed for the purpose of obtaining the use of the books. He lends out the books for as long a time as may be necessary under such rules as he may see fit to impose. When the books are all returned they are put back in the box and reshipped. The extent of circulation by this system is enormous, and it is said the wear and tear are trifling, one box of books having been shipped sixty times and several of them having been out five months. The secretary of the National Liberal Club, Donald Murray, states that 1,000 boxes do not supply the demand, and that the scheme has developed into a potentiality beyond the dreams of man. Mr. Murray says it is impossible to estimate the influence that has been exerted by the libraries. They have put the people in immediate contact with the best literature, and, as great care has been exercised in sending out only the worthiest class of books, the interest of the working class has been excited by the simplest methods. Each box contains a catalogue. At each village the box may be kept three months. No charge is made for the loan of the library, which costs on an average about \$50, but the village librarian may exact a fee from the borrowers of one-half penny per volume to recompense him for his trouble.