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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE Brahmins in India are divided by the question whether the water of the Ganges, their holy river, will not lose its sanctity after it has been bridged over by Europeans.

THE movement in Britain for the Establishment of Public Coffee Houses, or "public houses without drink," widens and deepens. Wealthy and benevolent men are starting them all over the country and are finding to their gratification and surprise that in a very short time they are not only self-supporting but actually pay a handsome dividend on the money invested. To succeed, however, they must have everything of the very best. Cold slops—called by courtesy tea and coffee—stale buns, and cheerless surroundings, such as too often have been found in temperance establishments, won't empty the taverns; but good, cheery, cleanly, comfortable coffee houses, where everything can be had good and at moderate prices, will. The London and Provincial Coffee Palace Company, of which the Earl of Aberdeen is a director, has eleven establishments in London alone, and it is said that at least 50,000 people patronize these every week. The largest yet tried was opened a few weeks ago, and others are planned.

WE suppose that by the time these lines appear in print the sentence of the law will have been carried out on Robert De Coursier. Such cases bring up very forcibly the transparent injustice of having no punishment whatever for wrongs such as this poor wretch suffered at the hands of his still more wretched brother. So long as such a state of the law continues there will always occur, every now and then, just such tragedies as this De Coursier one, for so long as the seducer goes scot free as far as law is concerned, so long will private revenge find its excuse, if not its justification. The great remedy, of course, is to raise so far the tone of sentiment and feeling, among all classes, as to render such a wrong impossible. But, in the absence of this, there ought surely to be some provision for bringing down the heavy hand of the law upon such wretches as Edward De Coursier. Perhaps there are not many quite as bad as he was, but there are some, and not by any means in the lower ranks of life either, notoriously not much better.

THERE is dissatisfaction in the Church of Scotland with the present method of electing ministers to parish churches. An overture was submitted to the Presbytery of Haddington, at a recent meeting, by Rev. John Kerr, and in support of it he said: "That it is found that the competitive preaching at present customary in the election of ministers to vacant parishes in the Church of Scotland demoralizes the order and worship of the Church, degrades the office of the minister, deters many of the best ministers from becoming candidates for vacant charges, and in many other respects is a fruitful source of scandal and division in the Church." Mr. Sprott, of North Berwick, held with Mr. Kerr "that the present competitive system of preaching and praying was a scandal." He denounced the present Act of Parliament as "a most Erastian enactment, and one calling for amendment," and he desired to see restored "the state of things which existed at the Revolution Settlement, when a board of patrons, consisting of the heritors and elders, elected the ministers." There is no plan altogether free from difficulty; but popular election is about as satisfactory as any plan that we have yet heard of.

THE Presbyterian Church in Canada need not reckon on receiving for any considerable time longer pecuniary assistance from the Churches in Scotland. The grants from the Church of Scotland to Queen's College are, we observe, to be reduced every year by the sum of £100 until the vote is extinguished. The grant to the Divinity Hall, Halifax, is to be discontinued after two years, and all the operations connec-

ted with organized congregations in the older settlements of our Eastern Provinces are to be wound up as speedily as possible. We cannot for a moment regret the resolution thus taken. The Presbyterian Church in Canada will do its proper work all the more effectively by being left to its own resources. The North-West regions are, no doubt, fields of a missionary character, and if the Churches in Britain help in the great Evangelistic work to be done there, as we believe they ought, they will do all for Canada which any one could reasonably either expect or desire. Thankful for the generous sympathy and assistance of past days, Canadian Presbyterians have, we are sure, no words of complaint over the proposed withdrawal of these grants. They will rejoice still in the sympathy continued, and if possible increased, and will only be too rejoiced that the pecuniary help is no longer needed and that they can be co-workers with the friends in Britain in sending the Gospel to the "regions beyond," in which multitudes from the old land are now making their new homes.

OUR Canadian civilization is after all not so advanced as many of us thought it was. We were aware that we had many devices prevalent among us which, though called by the convenient name of "sport," were simply excuses for gambling and for allowing the "knowing ones" to make money at the expense of the stupidly vicious and ignorant. Tavern keepers and others may get up walking matches to bring grist to their own mills, and rowing and racing encounters still flourish with the same gambling taint confessedly about them all. All this was notorious enough, but we were scarcely prepared for the following item of news which appeared in one of our Toronto papers the other day: "Cocking Main.—The long talked of cocking main between Toronto and Hamilton came off at Woodstock on Tuesday. There were seventeen battles fought, of which Toronto won sixteen, the eastern men carrying off about \$900 of the money of those from the Ambitious City. The agreement was to fight all the birds that fell in, and as the Toronto ones were heavier and better bred than the Hamilton fowl, there was a large mortality in the ranks of the latter. There was a fair sprinkling of Toronto men present at the fight, which was conducted in the quietest manner. The Torontonians returned to the city highly elated with their victory." We had thought that we had outgrown such doings, just as we had outgrown professional pugilism. It seems not however. If such cruel exhibitions, misnamed "sport," are not illegal, surely they ought to be.

THE United Presbyterian Church of Scotland is, no more than the Free, without its ecclesiastical sensations. It had a good deal of trouble with Rev. David Macrae and also with the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, of Glasgow. The former, as most of our readers are aware, was put out of the United Presbyterian Church, and the latter apparently will not be satisfied till he is treated in the same fashion. His case came up at the last meeting of Synod, but simply on a side issue with which, in fact, Mr. Ferguson had nothing whatever to do. On a mere technicality the matter was shelved, but now we learn that Mr. Ferguson is dissatisfied with the manner in which it was disposed of. He is especially indignant at the manner in which Dr. Marshall, of Cupar Angus, spoke and acted in reference to it, and has, it seems, made up his mind to bring charges of "gratuitous slander" against the doctor before the Presbytery of Perth, with which the doctor is connected. These charges are as follows: (1) That Dr. Marshall uttered against him in the Synodical Committee that dealt with Mr. Macrae a "gratuitous slander" in affirming that the position of Mr. Macrae, since cut off from the United Presbyterian Church for heresy "was an enviable position compared with Mr. Ferguson's;" (2) that thereafter, in the "Dundee Advertiser," he repeated the offence with such aggravations as made it clearly actionable at civil law; and (3) that at the late meeting of Synod, Dr. Marshall was again at this unworthy work, that is, "gratuitous slander." Dr. Marshall, as all

who know him might have anticipated, is not backward in taking up the gauntlet thus thrown down. He declares that the charges are false, and challenges Mr. Ferguson either to apologize for making them, or, alternatively, to bring him to the bar of some competent court, either civil or ecclesiastical, to answer for the alleged slander. If Mr. Ferguson does neither, Dr. Marshall "will probably feel that a painful necessity is laid on him to take measures for vindicating his character." Mr. Ferguson is not a whit less ready for the contest. He intimates his intention to support his charges by evidence in the Perth Presbytery, while at the same time he declares that the whole question of the authenticity of certain documents and publications, in reference to which doubts were expressed, may be easily and finally settled by a reference to himself. He is not at all anxious to shelter himself from any consequences which may flow from anything he has ever spoken or written by mere doubts about the authenticity or correctness of the documents in which they are recorded. Altogether this gives promise of becoming a very complicated and disagreeable case, in which much personal animus seems mixed up with zeal for orthodoxy and apparently with something very much the reverse.

THE eighty-first anniversary of the Religious Tract Society finds that noble organization increasingly prosperous and useful. We learn from the report that during the year the total circulation from the home depot reached 65,616,690, of which 27,216,190 were tracts, being an increase upon the previous year of 5,274,940. The issues from foreign depots were estimated at 12,000,000, making a total circulation of 77,616,690, and of 1,930,958,440 since the formation of the Society. These are wonderful figures. One tract has often accomplished incalculable good. What measureless benefits must have flowed from this vast array! The total amount received from sales, missionary receipts, and all other sources was over \$750,000, and the total expenditure somewhat less, leaving a balance in favour of the Society of about \$13,000. It is worthy of remark that the total amount received from subscriptions and other contributions, amounting to nearly \$125,000, was available for the missionary objects of the society, without any deductions. The missionary expenditure exceeded \$200,000, and consisted of foreign money grants, foreign grants of paper, electrotypes and publications, grants to emigrants, to domestic applicants for tracts, circulating libraries, school libraries, seamen's libraries, prison, police, lighthouse, coastguard, and workhouse libraries, and grants to colporteurs. There is not a single department of Home Missionary work which has not thus received invaluable assistance. The Tract Society has one peculiar and valuable feature. It has two departments, one publishing, conducted on strictest business principles; the other missionary, which is, as in other societies, benevolent. The affairs of the Society are so well conducted that last year the publishing department, after paying the entire management of the Society, yielded \$75,000, which were devoted to its benevolent missionary operations. Besides its work in England and English-speaking lands, the Tract Society is carrying on extensive operations in foreign countries. In France it has published a new series of tracts in connection with Mr. McAll's mission. In Spain it has started a new periodical for the educated classes. In Italy it has published important theological works and distributed large numbers of tracts among the soldiers. It has assisted an Evangelical periodical in Servia, published a work on Christian Evidences and numerous tracts in Bulgaria. In Syria a new illustrated periodical in Arabic has been started. In China, Japan, and India it is doing immense service in forming a pure and Christian vernacular literature. These are but samples of its good works. The press is being nobly utilized. Through its instrumentality Christians are only beginning to awake to a sense of their opportunity and their responsibility in this respect; but there is already grand promise of a future brighter and more powerful for good than any age the world has seen.