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Notes of the Week.

THE Presidential message, read to the United States Congress, contains the following reference to the Mormon difficulty: The report of the Utah Commission will be read with interest. It discloses the results of recent legislation looking to the prevention and punishment of polygamy in that Territory. I still believe that if that abominable practice can be suppressed by law it can only be by the most radical legislation consistent with the restraints of the Constitution. I again recommend, therefore, that Congress assume absolute political control of the Territory of Utah, and provide for the appointment of Commissioners with such governmental powers as in its judgment may justly and wisely be put into their hands.

SO common is the evil habit of profane swearing that many people have apparently become insensible to its wickedness. It prevades all classes. Old men are heard uttering horrid imprecations, school-boys going along the streets speak words that are shocking to hear. Some people seem to imagine that the least provocation amply justifies their use of impious language. How is this terribly common habit of profanity to be accounted for? Who are responsible for it? It is supposed to be banished from all decent society, and yet many who would resent the calling in question of their respectability, are given to the sinful practice. Why should there be so much indifference to the prevalence of this sin. Some one writing to a morning contemporary states, that a friend from Albany remarked that swearing and profane conversation were more common in Toronto than in his own city. The remark led to an experiment. In the course of a twenty minutes' walk they heard the Saviour's name profanely invoked forty-three times. It is high time energetic efforts were made to check this great evil.

TIME was in Scotland when "seceder" meeting-houses were built in the barn style of architecture. In these a pure Gospel was generally preached and strong, moral and spiritual natures were nurtured in somewhat unsightly tabernacles. Those days have past. Now the line of lineal descendants of the old seceders are rearing costly and magnificent structures. The congregation worshipping in Wellington Street, Glasgow, where Professor Mitchell, and after him Dr. Robson, long and faithfully ministered, have built a fine church in the West End, opposite Glasgow University. A private letter to a gentleman in this city says that it was opened recently "by Principal Cairns, by Professor Calderwood, and our own dear pastor, Dr. Black. . . The collection on Sabbath was £11,375 12s. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and with what was collected for the organ, the whole amount is £12,500—a sum unparalleled in the history of any church in Scotland or even England. . . We got £12,000 for our old church on Wellington Street, so we have only a small debt of about £2,000. . . We will soon pay it off. Every seat is let and the church is crowded every Sabbath."

BALTIMORE has been the scene of a most important religious gathering. The third Roman Catholic Plenary Council has assembled there. Numerous and imposing ceremonies have taken place. The people have been more or less interested in the doings of the

Council, but curiosity must remain ungratified till the proceedings have been submitted to the Pope and his sanction accorded. Surmise and invention have been busy and unlikely rumours have been put in circulation. Another notable ecclesiastical gathering assemblies in the same city on the 10th inst. of a totally different character and pursuing different methods. Representatives of Methodism from all parts of the United States and Canada will assemble to celebrate the founding of Methodism in America. There will be no gorgeous and scenic displays, but there will be hearty enthusiasm and direct appeals to the popular heart. The debates in Council will be in the speech of to-day, not in a dead language. The Methodist assemblage comes opportunely after the Plenary Council, showing that evangelical Protestantism is a living and a growing power on this continent.

AS a possible defence in murder cases tried in United States courts, the most popular is emotional insanity. It must be an infectious disease. It is dreadfully prevalent. The more repulsive the crime for which some wretch is condemned the more ostentatious seems to be the display of sickening gush over him. The latest hero of morbid condemned cell visitors is the scoundrel Newbold, who figured in various places in Canada as well as in the United States. He is now in jail at Toledo, where he is visited by large numbers. The *Detroit News* says: It is hard to imagine anybody less deserving of pity or sympathy, than the fellow who, utterly without pity himself and thinking ever and always of his own gratification solely, goes from town to town deliberately carrying ruin and disgrace to the silliest and weakest of women whom he selects as his victims. Yet his cell in Toledo swarms with a succession of sympathetic visitors, whose pity has only been intensified by his attempt at suicide—which, had it been successful, would have been a just and proper ending of the life he led. Suicide is the crowning act of his insane egotism.

NEAR Oxford, England, lately a lady went to visit a patient in an insane asylum. The porter handed her over to an attendant stating, "To visit a patient." Failing to catch the first half of the sentence the attendant conducted her to a bath, into which she was plunged in spite of all protest, and then locked into a room. The mistake was fortunately discovered and the visitor liberated. It is becoming only too apparent that perfectly sane people are incarcerated in lunatic asylums when relatives have purposes to serve by their incarceration. A striking instance of this is seen in the case of Mrs. Lyman, who has been so long an inmate of Longue Pointe Asylum. It is not reassuring to think that had it not been for the active interest displayed by a former employer she might have ended her days in that institution. The strenuous efforts to stifle investigation and to keep her there in spite of all protest, is a most painful feature of this sad case. Dr. Vallee, has at length reported that there is no reason why she should be longer detained. The gentleman who has taken such a praiseworthy interest in her case has expressed his willingness to take charge of her. Even yet in the face of aroused indignation every technical objection possible is urged against her release. Fortunately her freedom is now certain.

COMMENTING on the Boutel case, Bystander in the *Week* says strong and true things on the flabby sentimentalism that seeks to obliterate all moral distinctions. He says: The immoral levity with which petitions are signed is a by-word. Few people are conscientious enough to weigh for a moment the interest of the community, however manifest, against the trouble of getting rid of an importunate applicant. But a Minister of Justice might be expected by this time to know that, while of the signatures to a petition most are virtual frauds, the refusals of all who have withheld their names are genuine and ought to be counted against the prayer of the petition. Of what value do the sentimentalists suppose a life to be after the commission of a wilful and hideous murder? Would not the criminal himself, if he could see his

own true moral interest, wish to be released at once from his own loathsomeness, and from the hatred and horror of mankind! The infliction of death no doubt is awful, and we should all be most happy to put an end to the practice, if, as was pitifully said, the murderers would only set us the example. *Que messieurs les assassins commencent.* It is one justly forfeited and worthless life against the sanctity of life altogether and the safety of society. Mercy to the convicted prisoner is the worst of cruelty to innocence. But there are people whose perverse and morbid sympathy passes over natural objects to fix upon the criminal.

MUCH has been made of the apparent increase of crime in the State of Maine since the adoption of a prohibitory law. The other week statements appeared in certain journals to show that contrary not only to theory but universal experience the prohibition of liquor selling was followed by an increase of crime, as shown by prison statistics. Light has been cast on the origin of these statements. They are not the result of purely scientific inquiry and a sacred love of truth. They have done service in the United States for a long time and have been repeatedly refuted. They have been sent on their travels in Canada for the purpose of prejudicing people against the Scott Act. A minister in Portland, Maine, writes a complete refutation which has appeared in the *Montreal Witness* from which the following is extracted. After showing conclusively that official returns have been ingeniously perverted the writer says: In the six New England States and New York, which taken together form the North-eastern section of the United States, the number of convicts in state prisons in 1874 in proportion to their populations was as follows:—Maine, 1 to 3,200; Massachusetts, 1 to 2,200; Connecticut, 1 to 2,100; New Hampshire, 1 to 1,900; Vermont, 1 to 1,800; New York, 1 to 1,400; Rhode Island, 1 to 864; The six States surrounding Maine average one state prison convict to every 1,700 of their population, while Maine averages one to every 3,200 of her population. Intemperance is not the only cause of crime, and temperance people are not all saints. But Maine, which unfolds the white banner of prohibition and stands for "God and Home and Native Land," makes nearly twice as favourable a showing in prison statistics as her sister States.

THE latest received number of the *Christian Leader* contains the following. The Government have made a very narrow escape from committing a blunder which would have been emphatically worse than a crime. After ten days of most anxious apprehension the country was relieved by the assurance that there would not be bloodshed in Skye. But we deeply regret to say that small thanks are owing to the Gladstone administration for this deliverance. The work which they themselves ought to have undertaken was accomplished by a Free Church minister from Inverness, Rev. A. C. Macdonald, for a time minister at Thamesford, Ont., went to the island and, along with two of the local ministers, one belonging to the Established and the other to the Free Church, placed himself in communication with the righteously discontented crofters. As any one who knows aught of the people might have expected, the chief illegality which could be laid to their charge, the turning of the police so improperly sent, had been committed in ignorance; and as to motive, they remain what they always have been—a law-abiding and God-fearing class of people. This is more than can be said of some of the agents of the harsh and cruel laws by which they have been held in a state of bondage and poverty that made Dr. Johnson declare, when he visited the Hebrides a hundred years ago, that it would justify revolution. The sending of gunboats to Skye cannot be too severely condemned. It is an insult to a noble and unoffensive race, and illustrates the small amount of wisdom, to say nothing of patriotic feeling and humanity, with which some in high places are endowed. One good result, however, will come out of the evil. Already the Government, enlightened by popular indignation, have begun to retrace their steps; and the case of the crofters is one to which they will be compelled to address themselves in earnest without any needless delay. Whoever may be against them, the crofters have the awakened nation on their side.