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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE Presbyterian Synod of the Maritime Provinces has issued a pastoral address on the subject of Sabbath observance; it also recommends presenting numerous signed petitions praying for such legislation as will lessen the evils caused by the running of Sunday trains on the Intercolonial and other railway lines.

A CONTEMPORARY says: "Mrs. Emma B. Drexel, wife of Francis A. Drexel, of Philadelphia, who died last week, regularly paid the rent of more than 150 families, and distributed among the poor over \$20,000 a year. She employed a woman to institute inquiry into the merits of each applicant, and once every week dispensed groceries, clothing, and money to the poor, who gathered every Tuesday at an appointed place to receive her gifts."

THEY are a progressive people up in Winnipeg. That may be accounted for by their having good ministers and good newspapers. There is a happy absence of jealousy between these two powerful elements of progress, the pulpit and the press. They understand each other in the prairie city. Mrs. Piblado recently gave a sumptuous banquet to the newsboys of Winnipeg. Those assembled had a very good time. Excellent and encouraging counsels were addressed to the boys by prominent ministers and others, among whom was Judge Taylor, who is ever ready to speak and work for the good of others, wherever his lot may be cast.

IT has been obvious to all who have watched the career of Keshub Chunder Sen that he has latterly been losing his head. From one grotesque display to another he has gradually declined until now he stands before the world in an attitude in which the egregious vanity of the man is the most conspicuous feature visible. In a pompous parody of inspired words, entitled "The New Dispensation," he proclaims the Gospel of unity to all religions and churches on the face of the earth, asserting that he has been specially authorized by the Almighty to do so. Some people in India were at first inclined to regard the document as a burlesque. This, however, is not the case. The effusion is one that can hardly be treated seriously.

THERE seems to be a well-concerted movement on the part of Canadian educational and literary bodies to petition the Government for the removal of duty on imported books required by them. Representations from Halifax, McGill, Queen's College, the Toronto City Council and the Free Library Board plead for the free importation of books. So far as these institutions are concerned, it would be difficult to conceive that there could be a reasonable objection to granting this most natural request. For that matter, are taxes on knowledge justifiable under any circumstances? In a free and enlightened nation it is difficult to understand why a tax should be levied on books when there are so many other things less necessary on which heavy imposts would be advantageous. By all means let there be no embargo on the literature required by educational institutions, and let us hope that the blessings of a free press will soon result in their logical consequence, a free literature for all Canada.

THE Newmarket "Era" enlightens its readers thus: "A temperance man has collected the following information, from reliable sources, which will be found interesting. Liquor imported into Newmarket during the year 1882: Shops, first six months—23 bbls. whiskey, 25 kegs other liquor, 118 bbls. beer, ale and porter; 2nd six months—28 bbls. whiskey, 12 kegs other liquor, 162 bbls. beer, ale, and porter. Hotels, 1st six months—11 bbls. whiskey, 15 kegs other liquor, 108 bbls. beer, ale, and porter; 2nd six months—13 bbls. whiskey, 5 kegs other liquor, and 161 bbls. beer, ale, and porter. Making a total of over 600 barrels during the past year, or an average of nearly two barrels per day." Newmarket, with a population of about 2,000, it is not to be supposed is much better

or worse than other places of similar size. Statistical experts have it in their power to furnish effective aid in the promotion of temperance. Accurate statistics present the truth in a startling light, and some people need to be started before they can be induced to think.

PRIVATE letters and newspapers from South Africa supply pleasing evidence that the labours of Dr. Somerville are meeting with encouraging success. The "Natal Mercury," published at Durban, giving an account of his first service there says: "One special feature of the service was the vast number of young men in attendance. The singing was from Sankey's simple melodies, led by Mr. Cumming, with a united choir, and joined in very heartily by the vast assembly. The rev. doctor's able and very eloquent sermon was listened to with rapt attention." Private letters state that, notwithstanding the constant work and excessive heat, Dr. Somerville's health is on the whole pretty good, and that he is able to carry on his mission with full vigour and without interruption. During the few days spent at Durban he delivered twenty-nine addresses, which were well attended, ministers of all denominations giving their assistance. One evening Dr. Somerville addressed, by means of an interpreter, 200 Kaffir men and a few Kaffir women, who seemed greatly to appreciate the service. Kaffir and English hymns, led by Mr. Cumming, were sung.

THE popular conception is that punishment is meted out to criminals for the protection of society and, if possible, the reformation of the offender. This, like many other opinions, is getting too antiquated. We live in a progressive age. What is the use of having criminals at all? If some notorious evil-doer is found guilty of a crime more than ordinarily revolting, if he is noted for a good education which he has disgraced, or if he is the blackleg of a respectable family, a petition is forthwith presented to the proper quarter for the remission of a righteous sentence. The criminal class and their respectable friends are amongst the most patriotic of the people, they believe in the sacred right of petition. They of all others are the most diligent in the exercise of that right. A man well connected in Ottawa, who was in the Civil Service, was convicted of the plebeian crime of counterfeiting. Scarcely did he find himself the right man in the right place, the inmate of a penitentiary cell at Kingston, than a petition for his pardon was got up. Another scion of a Quebec family was found guilty of an atrocious outrage. Of course, on behalf of this precious scamp, the gubernatorial clemency has been invoked. This reprehensible interference of the course of justice goes steadily on. It is not conducive to the maintenance of the law's integrity. If people have an aversion to go to prison let them keep away from it; but, if their offences lead them justly there, let them stay their term in the seclusion a too indulgent country provides for them.

ABOUT two years ago an unpretending institution was established in Toronto for affording aid to a very deserving class. Many ladies in poor circumstances, but with educated tastes and deft hands, unable to undertake severe and exacting toil, are nevertheless anxious to earn money by their industry. This institution has had a fairly prosperous existence, as the facts submitted at the annual meeting of the members of the Ladies' Work Depository, held in Shaftsbury hall last week, will show. The annual report of the secretary spoke of the satisfactory condition of the depository, which, since the appointment of Miss Unwin as manager, had been almost self-sustaining. The commission charged on all work is ten per cent., and the monthly expenses of the institution is \$85. The depository is to be removed to No. 12 King street west, where it is believed that its success will be assured. The depository was doing a good work in affording a means for needy women in disposing of their handiwork, and thus giving them a method of honest and honourable livelihood. It also, no doubt, afforded a means for young ladies of earning pocket

money, but it was not to this class that it was sought to make it of most advantage. The money received since May last amounted to \$1,864.26, of which there was paid to workers during the nine months \$1,435.53. There were over 400 workers on the manager's list, many of whom were in positive need. The depository was now free from debt. They could appeal confidently to the public, and believed that next year's balance sheet would be most satisfactory to their supporters. Several gentlemen had promised amounts ranging from \$1 per month to \$50 per annum in aid of the institution; and it was believed that it would in a short time be self-sustaining. The financial statement showed the receipts to have been \$1,208.74, expenses \$1,172.98, leaving a balance of \$35.76. When the amount of rent due, \$50, was paid there would be a deficit of \$14.24.

WEEKLY HEALTH BULLETIN.—From this weekly report of the Ontario Board of Health, of which Dr. P. H. Bryce is secretary, the following particulars are gleaned. The weather of the week began with a low barometer and moderate temperature. This was soon followed, however, by a rapid change when the pressure increased 0.800 inches and the temperature fell. Thereafter the pressure again diminished, the wind remaining in the E. and S.-E. until Friday when it became westerly with a rapidly rising barometer and falling temperature. The sky during the week was mostly overcast, there being much mist and fog, especially in Districts VI. and VIII. The rainfall has been much beyond the average, one place in District VI. having recorded 3.08 inches in 25 hours. The differences from the average temperature for the several days are: 11th, +1.86°; 12th, -3.57°; 13th, -8.60°; 14th, +1.88°; 15th, +1.17°; 16th, +3.30°; 17th, +3.00°. This week's report shows rapid changes and a temperature on the whole considerably above the average. But these changes have not been such as to reduce diseases of the respiratory organs to any extent. Thus *Bronchitis* and *Influenza* show exactly the same percentage degrees of prevalence as last week; while along with these two, *Neuralgia* and *Anæmia* curiously maintain not only the same order but the same total degree as the four most prevalent diseases of that week. While we again notice the high degree of prevalence of *Fever Intermittent* (4.3 per cent.) we are reminded by one correspondent in District VII. of a probable explanation of its continued prevalence in the fact that the subsoil soakage into the wells carries vegetable organic materials into the well-water. While the reports of this week have many points of interest, the one of greatest moment is the increased number of correspondents reporting *Zymotic* diseases, principal among which are *Measles*, *Mumps*, *Scarlatina* and *Diphtheria*. Though the percentage to the total diseases reported is not increased yet this is due to the increased numbers of cases of disease reported, especially of *Bronchitis*. To show the very serious nature of these diseases an illustration may be given of what 2.2 per cent. of *Diphtheria* means. The Health Report of the city of Boston for January gives an average of about 40 cases of this disease reported per week and about 20 deaths due to it alone. Now it is pretty accurately calculated that one-twentieth of all the diseases actually existing in this Province are weekly reported to this Board. Hence we get the following comparison, taking this number of reports as representing the average prevalence of *Diphtheria* over the whole Province:—

Boston = 1 case in 10,000 of population—50 p. c. of deaths.
Ontario = 6 cases " " " 50 " "

Adopting the Boston mortality rate (if all cases of disease are reported) we would have 3 deaths in every 10,000 occurring weekly from *Diphtheria* alone. To point the moral as to the ways in which the disease may be spread and the precautions to be taken, Dr. Morrell Mackenzie, in the "British Medical Journal" has just reported an outbreak of the disease at Hendon, which has been directly traced to milk bearing the germs of the disease, the cans having been washed with water containing sewage.