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Notes of the Week.

The annual meeting of the Edinburgh Auxiliary of the Christian Literature Society for India was held lately in the Balmoral Hotel, Edinburgh. Principal Sir William Muir presided. The 28th annual report showed that last year over a million copies of the Society's publications left the press, but that the income, £9,709, was £800 less than two years ago.

Arguments and objections against interference by the Dominion Government in the school affairs of Manitoba are appearing on all hands as the time for settling this question comes nearer. At the regular meeting of the Methodist ministers of this city, held on the 16th inst., the following motion was passed, only one dissenting:—"Believing that the Legislature of Manitoba is legally and morally competent to devise and manage an educational system for that Province, which will be in the best interests of all classes, therefore, resolved, that we, the members of the Toronto Methodist Ministers' Meeting, hereby record our respectful and earnest protest against any interference on the part of the Federal Parliament."

The United States Government having had recently to call for a loan of \$100,000,000, the people have shown their faith in their government and country by subscribing for it almost six times over, and at a rate of interest generally regarded as favorable. Speaking of the result of this borrowing, the *New York Tribune* (Rep.) says:—"If any foreign power has been tempted to believe, by the conduct of the President in consenting to demands of international bankers, that the Republic could not command resources from its own people, or that the scare about silver which the President has been fostering for more than a year had broken public confidence, the answer of the people yesterday will show them that in any good cause the nation is ready to place at the disposal of the Government money enough for any emergency."

The life of an active politician is no sinecure anywhere. In Britain especially, however, they appear to be expected to be ready for speeches on all occasions, on all sorts of subjects, and to audiences which it must be in the last degree perplexing to meet and satisfy. The Armenian question is at present, and very justly so, one on which the public is very sensitive. Of a speech of Lord Salisbury the other day we are told that the sadly disappointing part of his speech was that on the Armenian question. He had to confess the total failure of the Government to secure protection for the Armenians and to compel the Sultan to carry out the reforms which he has promised. His tone was apologetic, and he confessed himself beaten. The other powers, he said, were of opinion that with patience, and by allowing the system of fanaticism to pass away, the Sultan could to some extent re-establish order, and allow industry and commerce to pursue their usual and secure course. That was their view: that it was our duty to give the Sultan time. It was not for him to pass judgment upon that view; it might be right or it might be wrong. The speech has been received with general disappointment, and it does not seem to satisfy even his own friends.

At the proposed union meeting of the Evangelical Alliance and the Mildmay Conference in London in June next. The following are some of the topics proposed for addresses, though the list has not yet been definitely arranged: The progress of Christianity in the Old and New World since 1846. Christian Union as proving the truth of Christianity. True unity as distinguished from the proposed "Reunion of Christendom." The Evangelical Alliance and Religious Liberty. The Holy Scriptures and Modern Science. Present day skepticism, and how to deal with it. Christianity and the Press. The unchangeableness of the Gospel of Christ. The Gospel and the masses. Christianity and social questions; or, Christian life in relation to domestic and social conduct. The Holy Spirit in Christian life. Foreign Missions. The dangers of Romanism and Ritualism.

Cabinet crises follow each other so rapidly in France that they awaken comparatively a languid interest abroad. One is threatening just now, which, if we can trust the newspaper reports, appears to be of more than ordinary gravity. Some even talk of France being possibly on the eve of another revolution, but this is not taken seriously. The President of the country has a hard time of it in keeping the warring factions in some kind of working order, so that the government of the nation can go on. It may be sincerely hoped that the experiment of Republican Government in France may surmount in the future the difficulties which threaten it, as it has surmounted them in the past. The peace and prosperity of so bright a people as the French, who have played in the past so conspicuous a part in the world's affairs cannot but be of great interest to the whole civilized world, and to us in Canada in particular, who have so many and such close ties with the French and all that concerns them.

An interesting case has come up in the courts in Quebec, which may become a cause celebre as that of Guibord and of the *Canada Revue* have become. It involves the question of how far a priest can claim exemption from the necessity of giving evidence in a court of law on the ground of action taken by him on information given him in the confessional, and in his capacity of spiritual director. It appears that a tinsmith in the Village of Granby claimed \$117.50 damages from the Rev. Marcell Gill, the Roman Catholic pastor of the locality, on the ground that the latter induced an apprentice named Victor Bernier to leave his (plaintiff's) services before the termination of his term of service. On Mr. Gill refusing to answer certain questions asked, on the ground that he was privileged, the judge committed him for contempt of court. The judge in his judgment in this case laid down some unquestionably sound principles as follows:—"Surely it cannot be said that a clergyman is acting in his professional capacity as such when he usurps functions which belong alone to the courts of justice of the country. A clergyman who violates the laws of the land is equally answerable as is the humblest citizen, and when he abdicates the precincts of sacred duty and becomes a participator in doing that which the civil law declares to be a wrong, he should be prepared to take the consequences. Any other course would be a subversion of law and order, the maintenance of which must surely be desired by this educated and exalted class of the community."

Dr. Macloskie, of Princeton College, New Jersey, writing to *The Presbyterian*, of London, hits one of the causes of American dislike and jealousy of England thus: "The only Britain known to many Americans is the unreformed Kingdom of George III., and the feeling of dislike is intensified by protectionist and free-silver arguments to the effect that England is now becoming rich at the expense of America and other lands. Counter arguments are met with the allegation that they are made in the interests of foreigners, and are anti-American." A long step toward a better understanding of England and kinder feeling would be a reform in the teaching of the American schoolbooks on English history, which, in many cases, so far as representing the present state of things in Britain is concerned, are antiquated in the last degree, and unfair and untrue.

The Venezuela boundary dispute which but a few weeks ago was the cause of so much anxiety and alarm on both sides of the Atlantic, will, in all probability, be speedily and peacefully settled. The British House of Commons is acting in the matter with great magnanimity, and both parties vie almost with each other in anxiety to hasten a settlement which will be satisfactory to all and so final. The *Times*, by its American correspondent, Mr. G. W. Smalley, suggests a joint commission, consisting of two British and two American commissioners, to inquire into and report the facts to their respective Governments. Sir William Harcourt, speaking in the House of Commons, said "he was perfectly certain that both inside and outside of the House the consensus of opinion was in favor of peaceful arbitration. Their main object ought to be to express such opinion. Every effort ought to be made to remove all causes of irritation. He trusted that no further delay would occur, that every thing would be done to bring about a speedy settlement."

The German Protestant Churches, the *British Weekly* says, are passing through a serious crisis. In 1890 a decree laid it down as a function of the Evangelical Church and as the duty of the clergy to take the keenest interest in the social questions of the day. They were not to shrink from displaying their interest, but were encouraged, even commanded, to step into the arena of social politics, and give personal and public assistance to the work of social progress. This was hailed, especially by the younger clergy, with delight as the dawn of a new and bright era. But now another decree has issued to the very opposite effect which is calling forth much hostile feeling and language. All attempts, it says, to make the Evangelical Church a co-operating factor in the political and social discussions of the day must necessarily divert the Church from her divinely appointed mission, the salvation of souls. From henceforth therefore the general superintendents are to check all such attempts on the part of the younger clergy, to keep careful watch over them that they take no part in public questions, and no longer gad about to Congresses and Assemblies. Recalcitrant clergy are threatened with discipline. It is plain that the functions proper to church and state are yet but very imperfectly understood in Germany and on the Continent generally.

PULPIT, PRESS AND PLATFORM.

Montreal Witness: If the Ottawa Government were wise it would withdraw its bill, cancel its order-in-council and appeal to the people of Manitoba to settle the question.

The Christian Guardian: The British statesmen are moving on the line of speech and action that will preserve and promote peace in Anglo-Saxondom, and will also promote Imperial and colonial loyalty.

Rev. D. V. Lucas: Christianity has not yet reached its highest point; no nation is yet wholly Christianized. We are little more than half civilized even, for the liquor traffic itself is a flat contradiction to the essential principles of civilization.

S. S. Magazine: We can only appeal to pastors and superintendents and teachers to do their best to impress upon the minds of every father and mother how important it is that they should heartily cooperate with our Sunday school workers, and encourage them in their noble work.

Rev. N. S. Burton: "After an experience of more than forty years in the pastorate, the writer ventures to give as his opinion that the smallness of the contributions to missions is due, not so much to want of Christian liberality as to the lack of information; not so much to stinginess as to ignorance."

Alexander Maclaren: The out-and-out Christian is a joyful Christian. The half-and-half Christian is the kind of Christian that a great many of you are—little acquainted with the Lord. Why should we live half way up the hill and swathed in mists, when we might have an unclouded sky and a visible sun over our heads if we would climb higher and walk in the light of His face?

Rev. J. Munro Gibson, D.D.: We have reason for gratitude in the progress of Temperance principles and the partial abatement of the terrible curse of drink. We may not relax our efforts against the vice of intemperance; but it does seem as if this other vice of gambling were the more threatening now, for in it there is no abatement, but rather a rapid and alarming increase.

Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D.: Keep your heart's window always open toward heaven. Let the blessed light of Jesus' countenance shine in. It will turn tears to rainbows. This last receipt is the best one. It is all very well to say, "Do right, and you'll be happy;" but there is something more than that needed. We must let the spring of our lives be in Christ, letting His Spirit guide us in all we do.

Mr. Gladstone: Some things are clear enough. The murderous wickedness of the Sultan, his absolute victory thus far over the European powers, their unparalleled disgrace and defeat down to the present moment, and the untold sufferings of the country. I cannot wholly abandon the hope that out of this darkness light will arise. But the matter rests with the Almighty, to whom, surely, all should address fervent prayers on behalf of His suffering creatures.