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Notes of the Week.

THE amendment to the Crooks Act, passed during last session of the Ontario Legislature, which renders liable to punishment the purchaser as well as the seller of liquor after prohibited hours, was for the first time put in force in Toronto last week. A young man against whom a violation of the law was proved was fined, and it was intimated that hereafter the law would be strictly enforced.

THE St. Louis *Globe-Democrat* says the President of the United States and Secretary of State never went to college; that not one-half of our senators have graduated at colleges; that only about one senator in six attended a school of national reputation, and that there is but one Harvard graduate in the Senate Chamber; that no amount of education can make a wise man of a fool, but the infusion of a larger element of college culture into our politics is a consummation devoutly to be wished. No possible danger is to be apprehended from such a source, but much of substantial benefit on many accounts.

THE first Roman Catholic Plenary Council for Australia has been held under the presidency of Cardinal Moran, sixteen bishops and many other ecclesiastical dignitaries being present. The council lasted a fortnight. The subjects under discussion and the changes proposed have reference, in view of the fact that Australia has religiously outgrown the missionary state, to conforming her internal policy to that of the Church in older lands. The disciplinary changes, etc., likely to result from this Plenary Council will, it is said, be similar to those already effected by the late Plenary Council of Baltimore for the United States.

THE Monday Popular Concerts have helped to deepen and extend appreciation for high-class music in Toronto. An evidence of this was the visit of the celebrated Musin company last week. It was clear that the many admirers of classical music were not aware of the marvellous performances of this gifted company, otherwise the Pavilion would have been crowded; as it was, the audiences were rapturous in their enthusiasm over the exquisite rendering of musical masterpieces by Miss Ewan, Messrs. Musin, Godowsky, the famous young Russian pianist, and Dunman, the accomplished tenor. It is to be hoped that before the season closes their services will be secured for a Monday Concert.

USUALLY the Queen's Speech at the opening of the Imperial Parliament does not excite much interest. This time it has been looked forward to with great eagerness. The attitude of parties in relation to the Irish Question has evoked the keenest interest. Now that the position of the Salisbury Cabinet has been vaguely announced, it is clear that the alliance with the Parnellites was for election purposes only, and it is also clear that the Conservative Party has resumed its normal antagonism to the National League. It does not appear that Mr. Parnell is the master of the situation he claimed to be a few weeks ago. There will be much discussion, but little progress toward a solution of the Irish difficulty for some

time to come. British patience does not promise to hold out much longer.

THE Ontario Branch of the Dominion Temperance Alliance, of which the Hon. S. H. Blake is President, has issued the call for the annual convention to be held in Toronto on Tuesday and Wednesday, 2nd and 3rd of February. It is expected that this meeting will be unusually large and interesting. Arrangements have been made to secure the co-operation of all classes of temperance workers, and the discussions upon questions connected with the prohibitory movement will be initiated by prominent gentlemen of ability and experience. There will be three sessions of the convention each day, all of which will be open to the public; but only members and delegates will be expected to take take in the discussions and voting. The public are cordially invited to attend. Arrangements have been made with the railway companies for a reduction of fares to delegates from a distance.

PLAINNESS of speech in denouncing wrong-doing by public men is not to be reckoned offensive, provided it is in accordance with truth and the best interests of the commonwealth. Reckless and unfounded charges originating in personal animosity or partisan bitterness can in no sense be defended on the ground of public utility. The unscrupulous nature of the attacks made on Warden Massie, of the Central Prison, were shown by the commission who patiently investigated the malevolent charges against him to be utterly groundless. The *Irish-Canadian* has had to pay dearly for the aid it lent a disreputable crusade, notwithstanding its declared child-like innocence and the goodness of its intentions. The *Mail* also has learned that the wild attacks occasionally made some time ago on political opponents are not paying speculations, though, to its credit be it said, of late its tone of political controversy has decidedly improved.

It has frequently been remarked of late that suicide is on the increase. The final act of desperation is by no means confined to the helpless and extremely destitute. Without the courage and hope that religion inspires, life becomes to many an intolerable burden. A well-to-do Southerner last week ended his career by suicide, leaving the following memorandum behind him. It is noticeable that among the indispensable elements of happiness religion is not once mentioned: To a man of birth, education and refinement three things are essential to happiness—health, wealth and domestic relations. Any of these lacking, life is not worth living. . . . I particularly request that no mourning be worn for me by any member of my family. To my boys, Jesse and Charlie, I say emulate my virtues, which are few, and shun my vices, which are many. Be frugal, but not parsimonious; generous, but not extravagant, and always remember that your pocket-book is your best friend, and when that is empty friendship is but a name.

BEGINNING the present session of the Normal School, the Hon. G. W. Ross presiding, Principal Kirkland delivered an excellent and thoughtful address to the students, in which he said: The work of the teacher was to take mind in its most susceptible state and form it for the great purpose for which the Creator brought it into existence. It was an unworthy conception of the teacher's office to regard it as intended simply to teach the young to read, write and cypher. The aim of the true teacher was to unfold the powers of thought, discipline the will, inspire the pupils with a love of truth, of virtue and excellence. The calling was associated with a long succession of the noblest characters. The apostles of our Lord were teachers. Our divine Lord Himself came into the world as a teacher. The aim of all the influences which God is exercising over His intelligent creatures on the earth was to teach them, to draw forth, to elevate and to ennoble their minds. Such being the dignity and importance of the teacher's office, earnest efforts should be given to prepare for its responsibilities, that it should be adorned by skill and scholarship, and dignified by personal worth.

THE Brantford Branch of the Evangelical Alliance have issued a circular on Sabbath Observance, in which the following forms of desecration are specified: 1. The burial of the dead on the Sabbath, when not necessary for sanitary reasons. We need not remark that this involves considerable labour on the part of undertakers, grave-diggers and others; and the choice of this day, in the great majority of cases, appears to be in order to obtain a large gathering and not to encroach on the time devoted to business on the week days. 2. Sabbath driving for pleasure. This involves the opening of livery stables and labour on the part of their keepers and attendants, in addition to other evils that are necessarily connected therewith. 3. The playing of bands of music on the streets. This evil disturbs the quiet of the day and interferes with the attendance of the sanctuary and of the Sabbath school. 4. Neglect of public worship. By some the neglect is total and by others partial; and we fear that many spend the remainder of the day in visiting or receiving callers at home. In view of these facts, the Alliance resolves to uphold the sanctity of the day to the utmost of its ability, and further would urgently request the Christian people of the respective churches to support them in their efforts to foster a love for the Sabbath as a day of holy rest and religious privilege.

It is not so very long ago when school examinations, and even Board of Education examinations, were little better than a sham. Now, many are of opinion that the opposite extreme, that of unnecessary severity, has been reached. The *Brockville Recorder* informs its readers that Principal Grant, of Kingston, has been carrying on a crusade against so many written examinations. In dealing with the question as affecting our schools there is a great deal of force in his contention when he says that the papers on which boys and girls have to write before they can pass from the common to the high school are sometimes appalling to a college professor. He feels thankful that in his day such fences had not been leaped, for he knows that in attempting to jump them even now he would be sure to get a cropper. And yet these papers are placed before his little son and daughter, and they, with fingers that have hardly learned to hold a pen with ease and minds untrained to clothe half-formed thoughts in words, are compelled to torture their immature brains to solve a number of puzzles in a given time, and write the solutions down in black and white, or be subjected to what must always be considered disgrace. A teacher who comes in contact with his scholars every day ought to know whether they are fit to pass into another school.

AT the annual meeting of the Toronto Board of Trade, the President, Mr. H. W. Darling, who has been re-elected for a third term, called attention in his report for the year to the growth of the indigent class in cities and towns. As the population of our city becomes more dense there is, he said, an increase in the idle, the vicious, the depraved and the improvident classes, who can scarcely be prevented from flocking to our doors. To deal with them in an enlightened, Christian spirit is a duty prompted by considerations alike of humanity and self-preservation. The many noble charities in active exercise in the city are highly creditable to us; but there is still need of effort in this direction, in which our men of business might very properly take a distinctive part. Who among our eight hundred members, having a heart for this work, will form themselves into a committee, and recommend a scheme, if possible, in connection with some established institution, with which we may be closely identified, for the consideration and support of the Board? In proposing a vote of thanks to the President and the other officers of the Board Professor Goldwin Smith made some admirable remarks on the portion of the address relating to the improvident class. For Toronto, it is becoming a serious question how to deal with what in time would come to be a dangerous element of a rapidly-increasing population.