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## Notes of the Week.

THE Vicar of All Saints, Lambeth, said recently that preaching to empty pews has a most depressing effect upon the preacher—more depressing than can be imagined. But the empty pews seemed to have stirred the vicar himself, for, it is said, he substituted five minutes' scolding for the Jubilee sermon his parishioners did not come to hear. It is disgraceful, he remarked, that upon such an occasion the parishioners are absent from their church. As the parish priest, I denounce their conduct from the pulpit.

THE Rev. Dr. Somerville, in reply to the joint petition to him from the Free Church Presbyteries of Orkney and Shetland to visit the islands, says that while he was profoundly impressed with it, he was unable to take advantage of this, the proper season of the year for visiting the islands. It was indispensable that in the meantime he should give rest to both brain and nerves. The call to visit Bohemia in the autumn, which, if entered upon, would occupy several months, was looming before him; and the future year was yet too distant to be arranged for.

DR. PARKER writes: A clergyman of the Episcopal Church will not preach for a Nonconformist minister, on the ground that he does not acknowledge the validity of Nonconformist ordination. In other words, the Nonconformist is not a minister at all, in the Episcopalian sense; yet that same clergyman can preside or officiate at the anniversary of a Nonconformist college, whose one object is to prepare young men for what is to him a non-apostolic ministry. Is the clergyman consistent? How can he recognize preparation for illicit orders? How can he wish well to students for whom he will not preach when they become ministers? Ought a Chancellor of the Exchequer to preside over private mints, to congratulate the coiners, and then reject the coin as spurious?

IN the *Contemporary Review* Archdeacon Farrar writes with passion against "The Drink Traffic in Africa," whose four divisions he takes one by one, in order to parade proofs of the extent and destructive influences of that traffic. Into the small island of Lagos, for instance, whose capital has only 37,000 inhabitants, Europe sends every year 1,231,302 gallons of spirits. Even the natives themselves are protesting, and every branch of trade is being injured; for, as the Archbishop of Canterbury says, it is an anti-commerce that is being established. The profits made by some of the drink sellers are 700 per cent. Dr. Farrar concludes with violent invective against the political idolatry of spurious liberty and *laissez-faire*, which permits these horrors to continue.

THERE is a strong reaction setting in against the number of branches taught in the common schools. The Boston School Board has taken a novel step in regard to the education of the children under its control, and henceforth the common school curriculum will omit all but the simpler branches of arithmetic, it being felt that the mind of the average child is more likely to be injured than improved by the effort to impress upon it the meaning of rules and formulas that older people find it difficult to comprehend. The change was made at the suggestion of prominent educationists, and meets with general commendation in the press of the city, by which it is regarded as a piece of humanitarian legislation, the beginning of a reaction against the too varied and too severe course of studies it has been the custom to require, and the benefits of which have been frequently and on the highest authority questioned.

THE fifty-fourth annual report of the Upper Canada Religious Tract Society has just been issued. The good work carried on by this excellent institution ought to have a still wider appreciation and support than it has yet received. By its means many are

reached and savingly benefited, who might not come within the range of other agencies. A new and pressing field for its operation has opened up. In a circular just issued it is stated that, since the annual meeting, an urgent call has come to the society from those interested in colportage in Manitoba and the North-West. Representatives of the Boards of the Bible and Tract Societies took occasion of the meeting of the Presbyterian General Assembly in Winnipeg to confer with the officers of the Bible Society in that city, and were informed on the best authority that the great need of colportage work among these people is that colporteurs should carry not only Bibles, with which the majority appear to be already well supplied, but also religious books and tracts, of which there is great dearth in most places.

IN English congregational colleges there is what may be termed a new departure. The *Manchester Guardian* says: We understand that a copy of the following resolution, adopted by the committee of the Lancashire Independent College, at their meeting on Monday last, has been sent to three of the four professors of the college. Resolved, That the committee, being of opinion that a rearrangement of the subjects of teaching in the college is desirable in the interests of the institution, would suggest that Dr. Hodson, Professor Turner and Dr. Thomson should leave their chairs at the disposal of the committee in the summer of 1888. Professor Turner has held the chair of Church History and Philosophy seven years, Dr. Thomson, that of Hebrew and Old Testament Exegesis eleven years, and Dr. Hodson has been connected with the college twelve years, including five in the chair of Science of Religion and Apologetics. The reason assigned for this unusual proceeding is to bring the professors and students into fuller harmony, and to make the teaching more suitable to the requirements of the time.

THE *Canadian Independent* has given voice to a feeling that not a few sensible people strongly entertain. It may be that fond parents like to see their children daintily dressed and marching in line, and no doubt many of the pupils enter enthusiastically into the spirit of the parade, but it is a toilsome and misdirected piece of tomfoolery all the same. The *Independent* has the floor. Of all the absurdities of our Toronto Jubilee demonstrations that of marching 10,000 school children through the streets under a burning sun, and the sun did burn during the Jubilee holiday of Toronto, is about the greatest. The moral effect of training our youth in this absurd levee of display, to the overshadowing of the practical ends to be gained by school instruction, of itself is sufficient to condemn the practice in any thoughtful person's mind. The effect on health in many cases is confessedly injurious. Partial sunstrokes are not among the unknown results, to say nothing of the anxiety endured by many, very many parents. All this, however, goes for nothing in the eyes of some school officials, whose vanity can find no other avenue to public notice, and whose only claim to gratitude is that they do no greater mischief to the cause of education than is being done.

AT Windsor, during the Jubilee week, a curious incident occurred. Principal Rainy and Dr. Somerville attended to present a loyal address from the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland. Several deputations from Ireland had passed in before them, and the Home Secretary, who made the presentations, had got a little mixed in his mind. He had a note which he occasionally referred to, but, as every one knows, Mr. Matthews' eyesight has suffered in this Session's work. Accordingly, when the two ecclesiastics made their appearance, he introduced them, in a clear and ringing voice, as "The County of Tyrone!" Dr. Rainy looked statuesque negation, the Queen smiled outright, and the Home Secretary, making a dash at his paper, announced "The Church of Scotland!" Something seemed still to be wrong; but an Irishman refuses to be put into a corner twice, and as the Home Secretary

rapidly presented "the Rev. Principal Rainy, Moderator, and the Rev. Dr. Somerville, ex-Moderator," the two gentlemen bowed low, and passed from the presence. They are said to have ascertained afterward, with a view to the *Gazette*, that the note in the Secretary's hand had been a correction: but it appears that a Lord Chamberlain is not the only official who is awkward at handling the three-headed Northern thistle.

THE waste of money in England, especially in London, says the *Christian Leader*, is enough to bring down a judgment on the land. It will not always escape the retribution of Providence—let vain and arrogant men fancy what they may; and the day will come when our descendants will revile the memory of those who left public burdens unlightened, public needs unsupplied, while they wasted immense sums of money. The Imperial Institute is bad enough, with its cumbering of the ground at Kensington, its absorption of hundreds of thousands, for nobody knows what end, its forced levies upon the wages of workmen and soldiers. But what shall we say of the Goldworkers' Company who use \$15,000 in distributing £5 gold coins amongst themselves? It will not do to say that a company is never to spend money for enjoyment or luxury. If an individual may do so, unquestionably an association has the same right; and it would be a queer world in which no one ever spent in fireworks or flowers, or music, or other indulgences. Yet there is always the inquiry, How far and how much? besides the other inquiry of the nature of the indulgence. We instinctively disapprove any brutal or barbaric outlay and call that waste, because the end is not worthy or beautiful. Now, imagine 600 men of sense and moral judgment dividing amongst themselves \$15,000 simply that each may have a new minted coin!

A MEETING of the Executive of the Manitoba Provincial Alliance for the suppression of the liquor traffic was held recently in Winnipeg, the president, Rev. A. A. Cameron, in the chair. The principal matter of business was a proposition to commence a general local option campaign throughout the Province, under the provisions of the Manitoba License Act. Mr. W. W. Buchanan, a former chairman of the Alliance, was present and addressed the Executive. He referred to the effort of three years ago, when the Scott Act petitions were circulated, and everything looked bright for a lively campaign. The temperance people of the Province responded heartily to the call at that time, and took hold of the work in a manner that indicated certain victory at the polls. This campaign was balked by the discovery that the counties marked out by the Provincial Government would not be recognized by the Federal Government as counties in the meaning of the Act. Legal advice failing to give a safe definition of a county in this Province, the campaign had to be abandoned. Under the license law as it now stands, he pointed out that the object then sought could be accomplished with much less effort than under the Scott Act. A petition of twenty-five per cent. of the householders in any municipality would bring the submission of a by-law refusing to participate in the license fee, and such a by-law being adopted by a majority vote of the electors, no more licenses would issue in the municipality. Twenty-five per cent. of householders were much easier to get in this country where there are so many non-resident property-holders than twenty-five per cent. of the electors. Then the penalty for selling without a license was for the first offence \$250, or five times as great as for the first offence under Scott Act, and for second offence \$500, again five times as great as second offence under Scott Act. He assured the Executive that prohibition sentiment was stronger in Manitoba than in any Eastern Province, and that a general vote in this line would be certain to result in bringing great strength to the prohibition movement of the Dominion. The proposal was heartily endorsed, and steps were taken to give it effect at an early date.