

Notes of the Week.

THE fifth concert in Shaftesbury Hall, last week, under the auspices of the Toronto Chamber Music Association, was an unqualified success. The performances by Messrs. Jacobsen, Bayley, Fisher and Correll, and Miss Elwell, of selections from Haydn, Schumann, Schubert and Beethoven were greatly appreciated by the large and attentive audience. Miss Clara Barnes' singing was enthusiastically received. The sixth concert of the series is announced for April 18th prox.

THE strong ultra-Roman Catholic majority in the cantonal government of Ticino, Switzerland, lately conferred on the Bishop increased powers in the appointment of parish priests. The independent Swiss, who have hitherto had a voice in the election of the priests, resent this interference, and the Communal Council of Biasca, one of the most populous villages, proposed to the people to renounce their membership of the Roman Catholic Church, which was enthusiastically adopted.

RUSSIA has made another effort to stir up a rebellion in the Balkan States. A few garrisons were incited to revolt, but were speedily overcome by the Government troops, and the attempt failed miserably. A number of the insurgent leaders and their followers have been shot, and many imprisoned. There is no doubt of the fact that Russian intrigue was at the bottom of the affair. Only the prompt and energetic action of the Bulgarian Regency saved the country from a widespread rebellion. The event has given rise to new war talk, the prospective belligerents this time being Russia and Austria. The probability of a conflict at an early day between these Powers is much stronger than the probability of an immediate war between France and Germany.

REFERENCE was made some time since to the excellent effect produced by Delitzsch's Hebrew translation of the New Testament as a missionary agency. It has now found its way to the Jews of Siberia, and has seemingly entered there also on its mission conquering and to conquer, as it has done in the Eastern provinces of European Russia, where no less than 30,000 copies of the work have been scattered among the Jewish people. The Jews of Siberia are reading the translation with avidity, and a movement has been inaugurated among them that much resembles that in Kischineff, in Bessarabia. These Jews are but little acquainted with the Talmud, and are, for this reason, thought to be more open to Gospel influences. The Testaments are sold and distributed from the city of Tomsk.

THE friends in Winnipeg are making timely and extensive preparations for the entertainment of the members of the General Assembly. A short time ago the sessions of Knox and St. Andrew's Churches took steps toward organizing for the meeting in June next. From Knox Church, a committee was appointed, consisting of Dr. Bryce, J. D. Conklin and R. D. Paterson, and from St. Andrew's Church a committee, consisting of W. D. Russell, C. H. Campbell and Wm. Risk. This joint committee met last week, and proceeded to organization. Dr. Bryce was appointed chairman, and Mr. A. N. McPherson, permanent secretary. The committee then proceeded to strike two larger committees, one of gentlemen, called the General Arrangements Committee, and the other a Ladies' Consulting Committee.

THE Rev. John Burton, B.D., of the Northern Congregational Church, Toronto, last week delivered a very interesting lecture under the auspices of the Young People's Association connected with his congregation. The subject on which he spoke was, "The French and Catholicism in Canada." The lecture was characterized by fairness and liberality of tone throughout. Between Mr. Burton and the ignorant

fanatic there is a wide gulf. Roman Catholicism as a religion was not assailed, but Ultramontanism as a political system, the lecturer showed, was what was to be guarded against. He confined himself to the statement of the problem, but hesitated to offer a solution. When an important question is discussed with the ability and fairness shown by Mr. Burton, and with no paltry party end to serve, the cause of truth gains.

THE Sabbath School Society for Ireland in connection with the Presbyterian Church, the *Belfast Witness* says, is doing splendid work. For a quarter of a century it has now been busily occupied in fostering and helping Sabbath schools all over Ireland, with what results the report presented by the Rev. George Shaw at the annual meeting most satisfactorily shows. The progress of the enterprise has indeed been marvellous of late. In 1872 the cash received for books sold was \$4,370. Last year it was \$17,070—figures which speak for themselves, and which represent a vast amount of real good quietly, but not the less effectually, done all over the country. One cause of the satisfactory progress of the society is undoubtedly to be found in the admirable manner in which it is officered. The Rev. George Shaw is a most indefatigable honorary secretary.

THE next Union of Churches will most likely be the reunion of the United States Presbyterian Churches, North and South. The four Presbyteries of Florida, two Northern and two Southern, concluded a most harmonious Convention at Jacksonville, February 18. The Convention was made up of lay and clerical delegates, and was notable for the presence of leading men. There was an abundance of fraternal feeling, and the result of the Convention will undoubtedly be seen in a spirit of hearty coöperation in the evangelistic and educational work of the four Presbyteries. No steps were taken toward organic union, but the Convention served a good purpose and was an important event in the history of the establishment of fraternal relations. Interest was added to the proceedings of the Convention by the presence and counsels of the Rev. Dr. John Hall, of New York.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* says that a religious and historical drama is shortly to be produced at Clapham. The characters will be taken by Church communicants, and a special blessing is to be asked on the performance. The drama has had virtually two years' rehearsal, and the rector of St. Peter's, Vauxhall, has thoroughly identified himself with the character of St. Augustine. A stage will be expressly built, and the drama produced regardless of expense. Skilled artists have been searching ancient manuscripts in the British Museum and Continental libraries, and the beautiful scenery will be historically correct. The ancient church of St. Martin's, Canterbury, where Ethelbert was baptized, the Roman slave market, the temple of Woden, and the beautiful scenery of the Severn Valley in Saxon times, are certain to win much admiration. The dresses and accessories will be perfect. In the heathen temple boys will dance around sacrificial altars, and the crowning of Ethelbert in the cathedral at Arles, will be represented with full processions, ecclesiastical dresses, sixth century armour, and suitable vocal and instrumental music. The rector of Clapham is sparing no pains himself, and receiving valuable help from others, to make St. Augustine a thoroughly artistic success. This looks like a return to pre-Reformation times.

IT is stated that the German Bible Revision is not yet completed, nor will it be for some time to come. The committees for the prophetic and for the historical books recently held an all week session in Halle, to examine the documents sent in by German conferences, clergymen, scholars, etc. Among the Germans also lower, or textual, criticism is the great problem in the revision. It is somewhat remarkable, that while the German scholars have been the most pronounced in their claims of the necessity of a thorough

emendation of the traditional text, these same scholars, in the revision of Luther's translation, have not ventured to deviate from the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Reformer. Only in a very few exceptional cases they have indicated, by using smaller type, that a passage, in its received shape, is doubtful. Our English revisers have, in this respect, gone far beyond their German colleagues, and have not been afraid to practise what they preach. Another trouble vexing the Halle revisers is the retention, or non-retention, of Luther's archaic forms, words and meanings. In the *Probe-Bibel*, published two years ago, the majority of these were retained. The protests, however, from all corners of the land have persuaded the Canstein Bible Society, in conjunction with the revisers, to make far-reaching changes in this regard before the revision is issued in its final form.

IN discussing the question of taxing Church property and ministerial incomes, the *Perth Courier* says: We would think it mean to tax the humble parsonage costing a few hundred dollars, or the slender income of the occupant, who is often as hard worked as any man, and is generally a good and worthy citizen whose example in well-doing is worth more to the people at large than his taxes would ever amount to. But the fashionable clergyman, who lives in a luxurious parsonage or presbytery, and is paid a high salary by a wealthy congregation, we would tax without scruple, exempting only such fraction of his salary and such portion of the cost of his residence as would be equivalent to the average salary and the average cost of the residences of his less favoured brethren in the ministry. And by this we think true religion would be benefited, not hindered, for all history teaches that wealth and luxury and the pride they engender are the worst enemies of churches and of true religion. It may be taken as a general rule that spiritual life in any Church declines and dwindles in proportion as its wealth and luxury increase. When a Church begins to exist chiefly for the sake of its endowments, its usefulness as a popular institution and a means of grace is mostly gone. Whatever tends to check the undue accumulation of wealth by Churches and ecclesiastical corporations is for the benefit of the Churches themselves and of Christianity.

COMMENTING on one of the practical problems of the time, the *New York Independent* asks: How can we draw in the poor? That is almost the only religious question worth asking nowadays. That is what bothers and interests every religious convention. Every church and every minister must answer it for himself; but the answer must be found, or the work is proved a failure. Anything is better than nothing. Real earnestness and hearty sympathy will find the answer somehow. The poor have human hearts like the rich or the middle classes. They have hopes, aspirations, religious impulses. They have pride. The man who is in earnest to reach them will get them. He must prove that he loves them, and that his interest in their welfare is genuine. There is no mechanical way of drawing in the poor, and for that reason the methods cannot be laid down for some one else to follow. Chief of all is the interest the church and preacher must have in the poor. Then love will find the way. Christ had no difficulty in reaching the poor. Any mountebank of a theorist who really cares for the poor, no matter how foolish his panacea, can find a crowd to follow him. What keeps the poor away is, more than anything else, a proud, pharisaical heart, which says, "I am better than thou." It says too often, "I was poor like you, and I became rich and increased in goods, because I was better and more clever or industrious than you. I could rise, and if you don't it is your own fault. I have no sympathy with your laziness, your unthrift, and your vice. I don't want your company. I have left it; and now keep by yourself, and I will keep by myself." Does the Church ever seem to talk so to the poor? If so, it is no wonder that it does not draw them.