

Religious Notes.

CHURCH REFORM IN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

The Rev. Thomas J. Pulvertaft, Secretary of the Spanish and Portuguese Church Aid Society, writes as follows of the situation in the Spanish Peninsula:

'Unfortunately the enemy to the Scriptural truth in Spain is no longer ultramontanism, but militant unbelief. Although 66 per cent. of Spaniards and 78 per cent. Portuguese can not read and write, the educated classes imbibe the teaching of the leaders of materialistic thought throughout Europe, and the publication in cheap forms of their works enables them to have easy access to all destructive attacks on religion. A strong movement in favor of religious

liberty has come to a head in Spain, but as far as can be discerned the underlying motives are not a passion for the freedom demanded by love of truth but an acquiescence in a feeling that religion is a spent force, and advance in civilization requires the nation to accept liberty of worship as part of its constitution. The spread of the movement in favor of liberty has led to the cessation of persecution by the authorities against colporteurs, evangelists and church-workers, and this in itself is a gain; but the deadened sense of the importance of religion is the great obstacle to the reception of Scriptural teaching.

'In the Christian Training College, in Portugal, under the charge of Principal Harden; two of the students were ordained deacons last November, and are now at work in the south, where their labor has been al-

ready blessed by God. In Setubal, where the senior of the students is in charge of a congregation, there is an earnest body of reformers, who have stood together for many years without a resident minister. In Lisbon the other deacon has already made himself felt, and a Portuguese gentleman has offered to build a church for him. It is hoped that in a few years' time there will be a real need for this church, but at present the two large churches meet the requirements of the reformers and the deacon is in charge of a country congregation near the capital, where he will be fitted by experience for more extended work in the future.'—'Missionary Review.'

At the beginning of the new year in India which occurs in the new moon of October, great throngs gather at certain sacred places. It is the custom of the priests to cook thousands of pounds of rice and pulse, and to throw it in a heap on the ground in the hope of appeasing the gods and gaining peace for the pilgrims' weary hearts. As soon as the rice, boiling hot, is poured upon the ground, the poor people gathered about snatch at it for food. In the terrible jostling and scrambling, characteristic of an Eastern crowd men are often thrown into the heap and burned to death.

The Philippine Islands have been one of the most fruitful mission fields of the church. There are eleven large islands, and hundreds of smaller ones, and the area is over 114,000 square miles. The population is nearly 8,000,000. There are about 100,000 Chinese. The Congregationalists, Moravians, Episcopalians, Baptist Methodists and Presbyterians are at work, most of them having joined 'The Evangelical church, with at least a common name. Not all, however, participate in this arrangement. There are now seventy-eight missionaries, and 9,073 Protestant church-members in the island.

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