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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

THE Rev. Walter Home, of Polwarth, is now the father of the Church of Scotland. He still attends to his pastoral duties with his former vigour.

THE absence of snow in many localities during the past two months has greatly hindered canvassing operations. We have, therefore, decided on still further extending the time for getting up clubs till 1st March next.

LITTLE has been undertaken in Afghanistan, Beloochistan, or Arabia, as yet. The American Presbyterians have three stations and eighty-one out-stations in Persia, with ten missionaries and 1,221 communicants. The converts are principally Nestorians. Access to the Mohammedans is becoming easier.

A LIBERAL Catholic preacher has once again made his appearance in Paris. A monk, Père Didou, has been drawing large audiences in the Church of St. Philippe du Roule, and has caused quite a sensation. But the Archbishop has interfered, and the Père has been silenced for the present. Let us hope that he may speak again.

IN the beautiful British and Christian island of Mauritius is a fine field of labour for missionaries. It is only forty miles long, and contains more than two hundred thousand heathen, with one language, the Creole, a corruption of the French, as a medium for the various nationalities. Many natives of India are found here, and have carried with them the most abominable heathen customs.

ONE of the missionaries of the Church of England, who went to China thirty-five years ago, wrote home to his Board a short time ago a sentence which ought to touch every heart: "From the day I arrived here in 1844, to the present day, I have never had the pleasure of the society of a brother missionary associated with me in the mission work here, and I suppose I shall never enjoy that privilege now."

THE first Protestant church building in the Tyrol has been opened for worship. It is only within a few years past that the Protestants in that country have enjoyed the privilege of forming themselves into congregations. It seems as if now better opportunities were before them than they have hitherto known. Sooner or later practical religious liberty will prevail throughout the bounds of the Austrian Empire, and Protestantism need fear nothing in that event. Give it an open door, and its ultimate success is certain.

THE native college at Malua, Samoa, in charge of Dr. Turner, is a most important institution. It numbers about one hundred students preparing for the Gospel ministry and other useful callings among their countrymen. This is doubtless the fountain whence flows most of the regenerating influences for Samoa. There are about two hundred acres of land belonging to the college (which of course belongs to the London Mission Society), and each married student is allowed to cultivate three acres, which in this tropical climate furnishes ample provision for him and his household.

THE Free Church of Scotland has interested several thousands of its young persons in a course of reading and study, which includes, for the coming year, such topics as the "Life of Paul," Paley's "Horæ Paulinæ," "The Conquest of Canaan under Joshua," and "Thomas Chalmers." Examinations are held simultaneously in each Presbytery, and prizes are awarded for the best examinations and essays on the various subjects. Questions which may be taken as a guide to study are sent to the pupils, whose work is, of course, done without any supervision.

SOME interesting information as to the religious condition of the Hebrides was given at a meeting recently held in Glasgow. At the time of the Reformation these islands were left unvisited, and from then till now they have continued very much in the same condition, almost exclusively Poman Catholic, and in the most primitive ignorance. At the present time, in a population of 500 in the island of Eriskay, there is only one Protestant family, while in the islands of South Uist, Barra, and Benbecula, with a population of about 8,000, it has been calculated that not one out of eight is a Protestant. To dispel the ignorance that prevails in these islands the public schools only go a certain way, and an association of Glasgow ladies maintains several schools for high-class education.

TO-DAY, 160 missionary societies of Protestant Christendom have 2,500 missionaries in the various fields, with 20,000 native labourers and probably 700,000 communicants, and 1,650,000 native Christian adherents. Nearly, if not quite, \$7,000,000 are spent annually in this department of Christian work. 500,000 scholars are being taught in 12,000 mission schools. The Bible has been translated into 226 languages and dialects, and printed in nearly 400 versions. Many of these languages were first put into writing by the missionaries. Many countries were first explored by them; they, more than any others, have developed the resources, material and intellectual and spiritual, of the nations among whom they dwell. With a world-wide co-operation, truly sublime, the Christian workers toil on. The great Christian army has now its camp-fires lighted in almost every country on the face of the globe.

ROMAN CATHOLICISM cannot have made so many converts in England as have recently been claimed, for, according to the "Catholic Directory," which is issued under Cardinal Manning's auspices, there are only thirty-eight peers and forty-eight baronets. Lord Berry, Lord Bray and the Earl of Ashburnham are the latest additions. There are now 127 archbishops and bishops in Great Britain, Ireland and the colonies. The whole number of priests in Great Britain alone is 2,211, which according to popular estimates, is not twice that of little Malta, with its 150,000 inhabitants. When these figures are considered, the enormous strides boasted of in certain English papers as taken by the Church can hardly be worthy of apprehension, for the number of priests well indicates the number of parishioners. It is a curious fact that Catholicism is on the increase in Scotland. But this is chiefly, if not exclusively, due to the influx of Irish. Of Scottish converts to Popery except among the weaker minded of the gentry, there are few, if any.

M. EMILE DE LAVELEYE, in a letter to the "Non-conformist," says: "A reign of terror is being inaugurated. They (the priests) refuse all sacraments to the parents who send their children to the normal schools belonging to the State, or to the communal (primary), and also to the teachers of both sexes who continue to give instruction in them. The number of people thus violently expelled from the Roman Catholic Church will be very considerable. In the large towns the priests will not push matters to an extreme, for fear of losing three-fourths of the population, but in the country districts they will persevere in the hope of attaining their end—namely, the ruin of the communal schools. What is to become, religiously speaking, of the families thus expelled from the Church? They will gradually sink into free thought (*libre pensée*)—in other words, into indifference and infidelity. Is not this, then, a fitting time for Protestantism to approach them? . . . Never have Protestant missions had such a chance of success, because the only issue open to the excommunicated Liberal, who does not forsake all faith, is to accept the Reformed faith."

THE situation of things in the Russian Empire was never darker or more perplexing than it is to-day. The New York "Tribune," no unfriendly critic, says:

"We doubt whether history furnishes in any time or country a parallel to the position which Russia holds at present. Other empires have been convulsed by rebellion, and other autocrats than Alexander II. have lived in mortal terror of assassination; but the rebels were united; the ruler had the support of his own caste; there was always somewhere mutual trust, bold outspoken faith in some principles of action. In Russia, apparently, there is none in any quarter or caste. The Nihilists are not trusted by the peasantry whose rights they profess to uphold. The nobles have fallen back from the Czar. Even his own son, the heir to the throne, it is shrewdly guessed, is at odds with him. The army stands apart, an uncertain element, on which neither the Czar nor the Radicals can count. The priests are aloof from all classes, and instead of being a spiritual support to any, are the agents, especially throughout the Steppes, of greed, ignorance and oppression. No man trusts his brother—the whole air is electric with secrecy, suspicion and treachery." Abroad, Russia is suspected and distrusted. She has no allies; and she has bitter enemies. A great internal revolution would no doubt do her good, as it did good to France a hundred years ago.

WHEN the Germans entered into possession of the grounds and ruins once the establishment of the Knights of St. John at Jerusalem, a discovery was made of coins dating from the eighth to the tenth centuries of the Christian Era. An earthen lamp contained forty-one pieces of gold, and a vessel one hundred and eighteen silver medals, together worth about one hundred and twenty-five dollars in precious metal. Some of them were of great rarity, and a few of them hitherto unknown to collectors. Deposited at once in the Cabinet of the Berlin Museum, they are now briefly noticed by Dr. Ad. Ermann, in the "Zeitschrift" of the "Deutschen Palästina-Vereins." Several belong to the period of the Omniade dynasty, whose coins have almost wholly disappeared. Many struck in Syria and Palestine are of peculiar interest. For example, whereas down to the present time only a single silver coin of Tiberias has been known, this collection embraces one of gold and another of silver, both dating about 320 of the Flight, or 931-2 A.D. Damascus is represented by a single *dirhem*; and *Hums* is elevated from the rank of copper currency alone to that of silver, by two silver pieces. Possibly Jerusalem is intended by the title *Falestin*, literally Palestine, borne by one silver and by several gold coins of the greatest rarity. Even Egyptian money found its way into this region, and contributes a large number of medals, of both silver and gold.

IN Protestant Germany the progress of absolute secularism has produced a reaction, but toward ecclesiastical domination rather than toward a devouter spiritual life. The recent Synod of the Evangelical Church of Prussia adopted, by a large majority, resolutions for the better observance of the Lord's day, a memorial praying the Government to abolish military musters, to limit railway traffic, and to cease secular instruction in the public schools on that day, and resolutions against intemperance, and recommending the adoption of the policy of the compulsory imprisonment of habitual drunkards in asylums provided for that purpose; all of which indicates a true revival of moral life, at least. But the resolutions providing for ecclesiastical discipline of members who do not bring their children to be baptized, or who are married without the rites of the Church, and for the discipline of ministers who even in private express opinions adverse to the creed of the Church, indicate a reaction against the religious indifferentism of Germany of not so healthy a character. Sceptical utterances, in or out of the pulpit, are to be checked, not by such regulations, but by a spirit of devout faith which will leave in the heart no scepticism to be uttered. These resolutions are as yet but indications of public sentiment; under the laws of Prussia they must first be submitted to the Minister of Religion, and after his approval must be sanctioned by the Emperor, who is the head of the Church.