

THIRTY THOUSAND A YEAR!

Systematic observation of earthquakes is only about a quarter of a century old. For fairly complete records of all the shocks occurring in different parts of the globe we can date only from 1892. Before that date, says Professor Turner, in the paper published by the London Times, from which we quote, information could only be collected on the spot, and was thus frequently lost. It was realized about fifteen years ago, more or less, that a series of earthquake observatories, with delicate instruments, could obtain records of shocks in any quarter of the globe, and identify the spot with certainty, even if there were no witnesses of the actual occurrence. From the records of these observatories, it appears that there are every year some thirty thousand minor shocks of earthquake in different localities. Of all these only sixty are "world-shaking" and observable from a great distance. Such numbers indicate immediately that, from one point of view, the Italian earthquake of last month can not be regarded as exceptional. It was only one event out of sixty per annum. What rendered it disastrous was the existence of great towns in the shaken locality.

The following about the cause of earthquakes is interesting, but not particularly reassuring.

What really happened in the south of Italy is known to the new seismology as the propagated effect of a fault-slip. It was not the eruptive outburst of Etna, according to Sir Norman Lockyer, that set the earth quivering in the vicinity, but a prolonged tension of the crust, a sudden snap, an abrupt settlement, and then the waves of the quake. In fact, as London Nature suspects, there was no very severe earthquake in Sicily at all. Those delicately-suspended pendulums by means of which the slightest earthquake movement is automatically recorded at seismographical stations all over the world, seem to sustain this contention. In its preliminary tremors and in the severity of the main shock the convulsion sustains no comparison with that of a few years ago in the interior of Asia, which went almost unnoticed because of the comparatively uninhabited nature of the region shaken.

A well known citizen of New York, who has frequently served as a juror, says he has never yet been on what he would consider in its entirety, a competent jury; that is he has invariably found from two to four members incompetent—who could not understand or appreciate the most important parts of the evidence. These incompetents are the most stubbornly tenacious. This testimony is not in accord with the satisfaction so frequently expressed at being tried by one's peers, yet we are afraid it is too true. Juries sometimes do very extraordinary things. Trial by jury affords some reason for the sarcasm levelled at it in Gilbert and Sullivan's play.

NEW BOOK BY PROF. JORDAN.

T. and T. Clark of Edinburgh include in their announcement of forthcoming publications a new book by Prof. W. G. Jordan (Queen's University) entitled "Biblical Criticism and Modern Thought." In this volume the author endeavors to present what may be called the historical background of the Old Testament. In his opinion it is necessary for the intelligent reader of the Bible, and especially for the expositor, to form a clear idea of the place of this great book in the history and literature of the world. In our effort to do this we must be prepared to accept real light from any quarter and if necessary to surrender some of the traditions that have come to us from the distant past feeling that the truth regarding any particular things is more important than its newness or its age. In this spirit the author discusses such subjects as the following:—"The Old Testament as a Problem," "Archaeology and Criticism," "Assyriology and the Old Testament," "Babylon and the Bible," "Early Hebrew Religion." It is expected that the book will be published in this country within the present month and a review will be given in these columns when it appears.

The devotion of the King and Queen of Italy to their people during the terrible days following the earthquake will do more to make their throne secure than armies and armaments could ever accomplish. They personally directed the work of rescue and aided in the care of the injured, without regard to rank—the Queen receiving serious injury from a crazed patient in one of the hospitals.

The claims made by Marconi, that wireless telegraphy would be found to be of the utmost advantage in cases of disaster at sea have received ample verification in the recent ramming of the liner Republic by the Florida off Nantucket shoals, with the result that 1650 persons, passengers on the Republic and the Florida, are now safely landed at New York. The accident is unique in the annals of maritime disasters, not because any appalling loss of life accompanied it, but on account of the splendid success with which scientific resources and invention were employed on behalf of the victims.

The new Scottish Education Act, which has just come into operation, deals not only with the feeding of children, where it is necessary, but with their clothing and cleaning. The first cost of this provision is borne by the school boards, which have the power to summon parents and ask for an explanation of the defective condition of their children. In the event of a satisfactory explanation not being given, the Boards have the power to prosecute under the head of cruelty to children, and if the prosecution is upheld the Court can make an order for maintenance for the future. School Boards may also set up Juvenile Labor Bureaus, by means of which the parents of children leaving school may receive advice and guidance in placing their children in situations. The Act puts compulsion on School Boards to provide continuation classes, but there is no compulsion on the part of children to attend them, though localities may pass by-law for the compulsory attendance of children at such classes between the ages of fourteen and seventeen.

THE BOOK OF ACTS OUTLINED.

There is perhaps no more effective way to study a book of the Bible thoroughly than to work out an exhaustive outline. An exercise not equal to this but very valuable is to study the book through following an outline made by another. A comparison and criticism of outlines is valuable. The following is submitted with the hope that it may help some one in a mastery of the book of Acts.

The book of Acts is easily divided into two parts. 1. Apostolic activity in and around Jerusalem, Peter and John being the chief actors, chapters 1-12. 2. Apostolic activity from Antioch to the foreign fields of the Roman Empire, Paul being the chief actor, chapters 13-28.

Under the first, the following subdivisions may be made: 1. Promise of the Holy Spirit, 1. 2. The Holy Spirit given, 2. 3. Lame man healed through Peter and John, 3. 4. Peter and John persecuted for Jesus' sake, 4:1-33. 5. Charity real and feigned, 4:34-5:11. 6. The apostles triumph over persecution, 5:12-42. 7. An adjustment of organization, 6:1-7. 8. Stephen the martyr, 6:8-7:60. 9. The disciples scattered, 8:1-4. 10. Phillip's activity, 8:5-40. 11. Conversion of Paul, 9:1-31. 12. Peter's activity in Western Judea, 9:32-43. 13. Peter preaches to Cornelius a Gentile, 10. 14. Peter defends his action, 11. 15. King Herod persecutes the church and dies, 12.

In the second part, the following subdivisions may be made: 1. Paul's first missionary journey, 13, 14. 2. Paul's victory over the Judaizers, 15:1-35. 3. Paul's second missionary journey, 15:36-18:22. 4. Paul's third missionary journey, 18:23-21:19. 5. Paul's great battle with the Judaizers for a free Gospel for all people, 21:20-28:31.

This part is subdivided: (1) Paul accused by the Judaizers and arrested, 21:20-40. (2) His defense on the stairs at Jerusalem, 22. (3) His defense before the Sanhedrin, 23. (4) His defense before Felix, 24. (5) Before Festus he appeals to Caesar, 25. (6) His defense before Agrippa, 26. (7) His shipwreck on the way to Rome, 27. (8) His arrival at Rome where he is imprisoned, 28.

Get a clear view of the book by reading it as a whole at one sitting. Get an intelligent conception of its parts by analyzing it or by consulting an outline. Master its contents by a close and careful reading following an outline. Criticise the outline, compare it with others and make one of your own that is better.

Against whom are we to charge the social distinctions that now curse the circles of Protestantism in this country, if not against the women? Men are naturally democratic. Left to themselves they seldom draw sharp social lines or insist upon conventional distinctions. What do we find in the one sphere where they are supreme—the political world? How much class distinction exists there! Not so with women. They are more gregarious, but at the same time more conventional. Is not fashion their standing incrimination at this bar? If rich, they are the more exclusive; if poor, the more sensitive. Social lines existing in the world without they have extended into the sacred inclosure of the church, until today there is no more conventional body among us than the well-to-do Christian church. Nothing hurts us so much as this one condition, and for its existence I hold our women almost exclusively responsible. Let them only say the word, and mean it, and this state of affairs will be gone in a week.—John Belcom Shaw, D.D., in The Homiletic Review (November).

Our friend of the New Glasgow Chronicle is constantly and persistently opposed to union, and expresses his great satisfaction at the action of the Vancouver Island Presbytery in declaring against it.