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NOTES OF THE WEEK.

VERY many throughout the Presbyterian Church in Canada will regret to hear of the death of the Rev. Robert Irvine, D.D., of Augusta, Ga. The Dr. was for ten years minister of Knox Church, Hamilton, and was an able and eloquent preacher of the Gospel.

THE University of Cambridge, England, has decided, by a vote of 398 to 32, to admit women to its honours examinations on equal terms with men. They are to be published in the regular class-lists and receive official certificates of the rank and honours attained.

THERE are at present 6,379 schools in Austria without teachers. 4,783 places have been temporarily filled with individuals who have received no suitable training; and 1,596 schools had to be closed altogether, as even these untrained individuals are beginning to become scarce.

BOTH houses of the Parliament of Brazil have adopted Article VIII. of the reform of the Constitution, "which gives to Protestants and their religion the same civil and political rights as the Catholics enjoy. In a word, the Government has thrown the whole country open to the sowing of Gospel seed as never before."

MANY of our readers will hear with regret of the death of the Rev. W. Morley Punshon, who at the comparatively early age of fifty-seven, has during the past week gone to his rest. He was too well-known in this country to render necessary any lengthened estimate of his varied excellences and undoubted ability and eloquence.

THE "Religious Telescope" asks: "Who economizes for Christ's sake? Who practises economy because Christ was an economist, with whatever power He possessed? Who looks to the closest economy in the expenditure of time, labour, and money, because to do so is to render the highest glory and service to the Lord Jesus? Or you, reader?"

AN event of no little interest to bibliophiles was the sale, in New York City last week, of the first book, a copy of the Scriptures, ever printed from movable types. The first bid was \$5,000, and it was sold for \$8,000. It is in the Latin language, and is prefaced with the prologue of Jerome. The binding is of thick oak boards, covered with stamped calf, with ornamental brass corners and centre pieces with bosses. It was printed by Joannes Gutenberg in 1450-55.

THE vote taken in Hamilton on the Scott Act has resulted largely against the adoption of that measure. It does not however follow that there should be any discouragement among its friends, far less despair. Public opinion needs to be more educated on the subject, and in the meantime it is better that things should be as they are, than that such a change as the carrying of that Act implies should have been secured by a bare majority, and thereafter been but very imperfectly enforced. The discussion has already done a large amount of good, and the end is not yet.

THE missions in the Turkish Empire of the American Board, the American Presbyterian Board, the Church Missionary Society, the London Jewish Society, the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland, the Methodist Missionary Society, the Southern Presbyterian Board, the United Presbyterian Board, the Reformed and Irish Presbyterian Churches are invited to participate in the Missionary Conference to be held in Constantinople, June 3rd. Also representatives of Robert, Armenia, Central Turkey, and Syria Protestant Colleges, the British and American Bible Societies, and the London and American Tract Societies.

HARDLY anything about Romanism has been more shameless than its "sacrilegious traffic in spurious

relics." It is a good sign to see the present Pope setting himself against it. He has authorized the statement to go forth to all parts of the Roman Catholic world, certifying that no bodies have been taken from the catacombs for thirty years, and warning them against impostors. The specimens that purport to be remains of the early Christian martyrs "freshly dug from the catacombs," are fraudulent. But as between the wickedness of impostors who sell "spurious relics" for real ones and the "pious frauds" of ecclesiastical impostors who make a spurious use of any relics, the unsuperstitious world will not see a very wide difference. It is high time for even Romanism to grow ashamed of its "old bones" meaning grace.

THE Edinburgh "Scotsman" states that the Free Church seems to be more divided than ever in regard to Professor Robertson Smith's case, "one section urging the settlement of the case on the basis of the decision of last Assembly, and another going the length of contending not only that Professor Smith should be relieved of his college duties, but that a manifesto should be published declaring that his views cannot be tolerated in the Free Church. Since the announcement of the early publication of Professor Smith's lectures in Glasgow and Edinburgh on 'Elements of Biblical Criticism,' the leaders of the traditional party in the Church have, we believe, had under consideration the propriety of issuing the statement prepared immediately after last Assembly," which shews that the views of Professor Smith are not those of the Free Church.

FROM an article in a late number of the "Contemporary Review," we learn that the annual increase of self-murder for each million of inhabitants in the countries and periods named, stood as follows:

Italy.....	1864 to 1878, from	30 to 37
Belgium.....	1831 to 1876, from	39 to 68
Great Britain and Ireland.....	1860 to 1878, from	66 to 70
Sweden and Norway.....	1820 to 1877, from	39 to 80
Austria.....	1860 to 1878, from	70 to 122
France.....	1827 to 1877, from	52 to 149
Prussia.....	1820 to 1878, from	71 to 133
Denmark.....	1836 to 1876, from	213 to 258
United States.....	1845 to 1878, from	117 to 163
Minor German States.....	1835 to 1878, from	117 to 289

This gives a very sad and discouraging view of matters, yet perhaps not so much so as might at first sight appear, for we are to bear in mind that statistics of all kinds are now far more accurately kept than they used to be. At the same time it cannot be doubted that the feverish activity of modern ways combined with the spread of the fashionable philosophy which teaches that this life is all, and that man is nothing but a curious and inexplicable result of a certain combination of matter, naturally issue in an ever growing recklessness, and in making it be believed that to take either one's own life or that of any other man is a comparatively small matter, nay, one which in certain circumstances may be highly justifiable and praiseworthy. Degrading theories will always naturally issue in correspondingly degraded practice.

THE new bills proposing reform in the Irish land laws were introduced into Parliament recently. If the outline which has been telegraphed is substantially correct, a great advance has been made from the Act of 1870. The compensations for improvements and disturbance provided for in the earlier measure are extended. The concessions made in the direction of the "Three F's"—Fair Rent, Fixity of Tenure and Free Sale—are significant. Whenever the tenant and landlord cannot agree upon the rent, the local court is to decide what sum is reasonable. When such a rent is fixed it cannot be altered for fifteen years. At the end of that period the estate will be subject to revaluation. It is not easy to determine from the synopsis precisely how far Free Sale has been recognized in the new bill. The sale of tenant right seems to be permitted under conditions which will tend to prevent its recurrence. The tenant can sell, but the landlord must have the first offer, and upon grounds which the local court may consider reasonable, he can prohibit the sale altogether. The landlord, in his turn, can raise the rent, and the

tenant can either take the lease or sell his holding, receiving in return the increase multiplied by ten; and the purchasing tenant can demand from the landlord a similar amount capitalized.

DR. RILE, a Wesleyan missionary in Spain, writes that the downfall of the Spanish cabinet is the greatest event since the revolution of 1868, when religious liberty was proclaimed. "During the last six years king, cabinet, and priests had been steadily, yet not quite openly united in an effort to reinstate civil and religious despotism, and gradually to extinguish liberty of worship, but in one day the king found himself compelled to give up the cabinet that would have provoked another revolution and overturned his throne. The members of the present cabinet, the leaders of public opinion, and the most intelligent and influential Spaniards, are declared advocates of religious liberty, but the ground is equally open to the propagators of atheism and the preachers of the Gospel. The Spanish Liberals and Democrats are demanding more toleration for Protestants and Rationalists. The influence of the prelates and clergy makes it very difficult for the cabinet to pursue a policy of toleration. In March the cabinet resolved to give a free pardon and liberty to a native Protestant pastor condemned to several months' imprisonment, under the Canovas cabinet, because he held prayer-meetings in Catalonia, and the village authorities prosecuted him under the law of public meetings. The judicial proceedings against several Protestants will also be abandoned in the provinces, under the orders of the ministry. The reply given to the Papal Nuncio states that neither the Concordat nor the constitution is violated by the toleration the government is determined to grant to Spaniards who are not Catholics, and that no interference of the bishops and the Holy See against the rights of the government under the constitution will be tolerated."

THE struggle in Belgium over the State schools still goes on with ever-growing bitterness, though it is said by last accounts that orders have been issued by the Pope to the bishops and priests to the effect that their opposition to these schools must cease. It remains to be seen whether that order has really been issued, and whether if it has been, it was intended that it should be really obeyed. The Belgian priests did all in their power to prevent the establishment of commercial schools. Failing in this, their efforts since have been in the way of preventing by the exercise of their ecclesiastical power the parents from allowing their children to attend. From the report of a Parliamentary Commission appointed to inquire into the nature and extent of this clerical intimidation, it appears that children so attending have not been allowed to enter confirmation classes, and that the parents of such were kept back from communion, while the teachers both male and female were refused seats in the churches, and were threatened with excommunication if they persisted in occupying positions in Government schools. Pressure has also, it is said, been brought to bear upon the sick and dying, so that the confessions of such have been refused except on condition of their promising to withdraw their children from these obnoxious institutions. Some of the priests had been examined by the Commission, and had at once frankly acknowledged what they had done, at the same time fully justifying their proceedings as necessary at once for the honour of the Church and the good of souls. Of course all this causes lively agitation and universal discussion, with no doubt the best results in the long run in favour of free thought and free speech. At the same time we cannot but add that if these priests and bishops actually believe that attendance upon such schools is in the last degree spiritually injurious to the pupils, they could not well do anything else than try to prevent by every legitimate means the infliction of such injury. The misery is that they do not seem to be satisfied with legitimate means, but resort to what issues in physical force and even local riot. In doing this, they are both foolish and shortsighted, as every day's experience is making manifest.