

The following is a passage from the letter in the *Pays* alluded to by our correspondent:—

"The four sons of Nicholas represent well enough the character of their uncles whose names they bear in order of primogeniture. The actual Czar Alexander reminds one, if not in figure, at least by his mild disposition—full of grace and kindness—of Alexander 1. Like him, he is tall and stout, with a shade of religious melancholy on his countenance. The Grand-Duke Constantine, whom the old Russian party would have liked to see ascend the throne, is a man of violent character, passionate and obstinate. Except in stature, he is the portrait of his uncle Constantine, late Viceroy of Poland, known for his cruelty. The High Admiral is short and squat, with a disagreeable expression of countenance; his walk is slovenly, his look ill-natured; his shrill voice often betrays his thoughts. The two other Grand-Dukes are good-tempered enough, and remind one a little of the Emperor Nicholas when very young.

"In the midst of these four men of different stamp is the young Empress—a soft, excellent woman, beloved and respected by all. Under the mask of indifference she conceals a tender, generous, and humane heart, a soul equal to her position and to the sad inheritance left to her husband by the deceased Czar. Gifted with superior intelligence, she knows how to keep within bounds the two parties which are actually contending for the upper hand. Better than the Empress Dowager, whose ambition was confined to the affection of the Emperor Nicholas, the reigning Empress has gained an ascendancy over her husband which he does not attempt to throw off. She knows how to keep up a good understanding between her husband and his brothers, especially the Grand-Duke Constantine. An anecdote is told of her which shows her tact. The Grand-Duke Constantine, some time since, in a council of war, made a most singular proposition—namely, to arm and equip the whole fleet of Cronstadt, Revel, and Sweaborg, to embark 20,000 men of picked troops, to make sail at a propitious hour, to force a passage through the allied squadrons, or await their departure, and the moment they left the Baltic to effect a landing in Scotland or England.

"Rather than perish with his men in the basin of Cronstadt, was it not better to attempt to strike terror at London, which he hoped to enter with his 20,000 men, without meeting any serious opposition on the way? Certainly, the plan was bold and even practicable, and on due examination there was a chance of success, especially if the vigilance of the allied fleets could be deceived. For a moment he gained over the Emperor, and even the advisers of the Crown to his views. If it did perish, at all events the Russian fleet would have wiped out the reproach of cowardice which was pointed at it from all sides, even in Germany. The Empress most energetically opposed the enterprise, which might compromise the safety of St. Petersburg itself. The Russian armies had enough to occupy them without depriving themselves of 20,000 soldiers and as many sailors, which might one day be wanted to defend the Baltic coast. The Emperor hearkened to the advice of his wife, and disapproved his brother's plan. It is, however, said that he has again resumed it. His *idée fixe* appears to be that he could sack and burn London, or bury himself and his troops under the smoking ruins of the first commercial city of the world."

The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, DEC. 8, 1855.

S. P. G. REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1855.

The Report of the Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, for the year 1855, with which we have been favored, affords a gratifying account of the Society's labours in various parts of the world; tinged with a mournful remembrance of the death during the past year, of three of its Vice Presidents—Joshua Watson, Esq., the Rev. Dr. Spry, and Sir Robert Harry Inglis. The Society has recorded its thankful sense of the services of the first named, in a formal minute, and the benefit of the judicious advice and even ready support of the latter, is also formally acknowledged in a resolution of the Society.

The income and expenditure of the Society are stated as follows:—

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.	
The gross Receipts of the Society for the year ending 31st Dec. 1854, amounted to	£104,521
Of which there was—	
Appropriated by the Donors to	
Special Purposes	£23,429
Collections under the Queen's Letter	27,710
	51,139

The ordinary Income of the Society, available for its general purposes, was therefore £83,382. Adding one-third (£3,237) of the Queen's Letter Collection, the total Income was raised to £86,619. The expenditure on the General Fund Account for the year 1854, was £60,396.

The following instance of self-denial on behalf of the Society, meets, as it deserves, a special record:

"The Society last year recorded an instance of great liberality in one of the Australian Clergy voluntarily resigning his Missionary salary. It has this year the satisfaction of mentioning a similar instance of generosity on the part of a Clergyman in the Diocese of Fredericton, whose stipend was by no means excessive. "The Society," says the Bishop, "will be gratified to learn that the Rev. Charles Lee, of Portland, (St. John,) begs me to place at its disposal £25 out of the £50 received by him as its Missionary, and will only draw "for a portion of the smaller sum in July." This act of generous self-denial has no doubt been prompted by a knowledge of the difficulty with which, and the persons (in many instances the very poor) from whom Missionary funds are collected in this country."

There is one topic of the Society's report, which appropriately follows the above, and the importance of which, in the action it will have upon the future prospects of the Church in this Diocese, cannot be overrated. If the statement lead to a more zealous effort amongst the people, to make the Church self-sustaining, the object will be accomplished. On the part of the Society it is the reiteration of a principle of its operation, and this is done with a view to point out the duty of the people to provide out of their own means for the maintenance of the Gospel ministry; and it points unequivocally to a time when so far as the S. P. G. is concerned, they must do without its aid.

"The Society would heartily rejoice to see the Clergy in the several Colonial Dioceses competently, and even (where it is possible) handsomely provided for; but this can be effected only by a more free spirit of giving among the people to whom they minister.

"All that the Society as trustee for its many thousand contributors, (of whom comparatively few are among the wealthier class,) can do, is to contribute such a sum as, in addition to what can be raised on the spot, or in the Diocese, may suffice to provide a decent competence for its Missionary. Even such grants are now necessarily made for a limited time, and that for two sufficient reasons: 1st. That the Society's own means of continuing the grant may fail; and, 2nd. the increase in the population or wealth of any particular station may render extraordinary aid no longer necessary. To continue the support of a Mission which does not really need it, is of course to squander funds which have been given to secure the ministrations of religion where otherwise they could not be had.

"In order at all adequately to accomplish its work, the Society must have the means of following the poor emigrant to his home in the wilderness, and availing itself of promising openings for the establishment of Missions among the heathen—as recently in Borneo and South Africa—but it can only hope to effect this by gradually withdrawing from the older and more settled Missions, and reducing its allowances wherever local resources can be found to make up the deficiency."

The Report takes especial notice of the fresh ground that has been occupied by the Society in making provision for the spiritual instruction and consolation of the army in the East, and a number of letters are published by its chaplains, all affording testimony to the importance of their ministrations. Twelve assistant Chaplains were selected at first by the Society, three of whom fell victims to the camp fever, and two were ordered home for the recovery of their health. The Government gladly availed itself of the further assistance of the Society, and up to the time of preparing the Report the total number of Chaplains appointed was 25. A large amount of their correspondence, dated from the East, is published, and is of much interest, some of which has appeared in the *Church Times*.

After these letters and extracts, the Report enters upon an abstract of what has been done through the instrumentality of the Society, in the various dioceses throughout the British dominions and dependencies, commencing with Nova Scotia, the scene of its earliest labours, and concluding with Pitcairn's Island. We shall take a future opportunity of culling from the mass of interesting matter before us, over this wide extent of the Society's labours, some of the more graphic and important descriptions.

THE R. M. Steamship *America* arrived early on Wednesday morning, and brings news to the 24th ult., and official despatches from the seat of war to Nov. 16. The campaign may be said to be closed, and the belligerents are evidently doing the best they can to make themselves comfortable. It is at least consoling to believe that our brave soldiers will not be exposed to the same degree of hardships which they so nobly sustained during the last winter; although it is not at all probable that they will enjoy a life of slothful inactivity in the vicinity of the wily foe. Preparations were making for a bombardment of the northern fort, with the twofold object of driving the enemy from them, and securing the harbour of Sebastopol to winter the fleet. Nor are the apprehensions of an attack by the Russians on the allies position altogether allayed.

Rumours are prevalent that the Russian Emperor is disposed to make concessions with the object of forming a basis on which negotiations for a termination of the war might be entered upon; and that these proposals having been submitted to the Emperor of the French, although they do not meet the demands of the Allies, are deemed to be entitled to serious consideration.

The British squadron in the Sea of Azoff have been distressing the enemy by the destruction of vast quantities of grain and forage; and by destroying their fishing establishments, upon which latter it is evident that the inhabitants of the coasts place much dependence for their winter's sustenance.

THE R. M. Steamship *Canada* arrived from Boston on Thursday night. The news is not important, except as revealing a state of things in Central America, which impresses a belief, that Nicaragua will be absorbed by the American Union, after the most approved Texas fashion, or made to subserve its purposes of neutralizing British influence in that direction. The filibustering General Walker is commander-in-chief of the Nicaraguan army—his principal officers appear to be men of his own stamp, and upon the decision of a packed court martial, General Corral, minister at War, has been condemned to death and shot, for alleged treason, in that he disapproved of General Walker's proceedings. The President of Nicaragua and government officials appear to be mere tools in Walker's hands, who is no doubt acting indirectly under authority from the United States. An accredited minister from the United States, General Wheeler, had been received by General Rivas. The principles enunciated by him show the interference of the United States as plain as it is safe just now to exhibit it—and we have no doubt whatever, that much trouble is brewing between the old world and the new, arising out of the established interests of the former, and the exclusive pretensions of the United States to hold America for the Americans; in other words to establish the preponderance of the American Union, in all the governments of that vast continent, and the adjoining Islands.

MR. LABOUCHERE is the new Colonial Secretary. The *London Guardian* is not very complimentary to the appointment. Mr. Labouchere was at one time, we believe, President of the Board of Trade:—

"The length of the time during which the Colonial-office has been vacant ceases to be surprising when we find that it is to be occupied by Mr. Labouchere. It required the fortitude of despair to make that nomination public. For Mr. Labouchere is notoriously not a capable man. He wants, if not industry, certainly administrative power; he is one of the old Whig lot—the second-rates who have been laid upon the shelf; and notwithstanding his wealth, amiability, and good connections, he will be an element of weakness, not of strength, in the Ministry to which he has been (we may be sure, reluctantly) added. He is not indeed the only *pis aller* in the Cabinet. But it is disagreeable to be governed by *pis allers*."

THE last *Royal Gazette* publishes a statement of the Chairman of the Railway Board, of the traffic of the road, for the quarter ending 8th September, which is so far gratifying that it shows an excess of £580 8s. 10½. receipts, over the expenditure—and is good earnest for the success of the work after it shall have been completed to Windsor.

THE St. John, N. B., *Courier*, of Dec. 1, says, "Notwithstanding the winter may be considered to have fairly set in, there appears to be no diminution of travel northward. The steamer *Admiral*, on Wednesday night brought upwards of 150 passengers. The *Adelaide* on the previous evening had 70, most of which were railway navvies on their way to Nova Scotia."

THE Canadian papers mention the marriage of Viscount Bury, well known in that country, to Sophia, second daughter of Sir Allan McNab.