

Notes of the Month.

THE past month has been characterised by considerable political excitement in the mother country. On the re-assembling of Parliament after Easter, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the second reading of the Reform Bill which had been introduced on the 12th of March. The amendment was moved by Lord Grosvenor, and powerfully seconded by Lord Stanley. The Conservative party express themselves favourable to an extension of the franchise, but assert that, as a redistribution of seats is a more pressing reform, it is proper that the House should first know the whole scheme of the Government as to redistribution. There has been much apathy among the working classes on the question, which all the efforts of Mr. Bright and Co. have not sufficed to remove. It is thought that the Government shall have a majority of twenty, but there is evidence that many supporters are reluctant, alarmed at the democratic tendencies of the Bright-policy, and probably ready to introduce nullifying amendments into the bill in Committee. A motion was introduced in the Commons to inquire into the state of the Irish Church. On the European continent, Austria and Prussia are menacing war, having quarrelled over the spoil which they had unlawfully wrested from little Denmark. It is thought that they will not come to blows, restrained not by the federal principle, but by self-interest, as the ultimate issues likely would be, that Italy would gain Venetia, and France the Provinces of Federal Germany south of the Rhine.

SOCIAL movements in Britain, apart from the Rinderpest and Reform, have been peaceful and interesting. As the Government would not appoint a Fast on account of the plague, the Archbishop of Canterbury did. The matter has given birth to a discussion upon the use of Fast days and control of God over the world—the old controversy concerning the antagonism between a superintending Will and fixed laws. An English rector publishes a sermon in which he refuses to mourn on account of the scarcity of roast beef, and a Scotch minister overtures the Assembly in the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr to inquire into sacramental Fast days, which motion is carried. The argument is now commonly urged, that on Fast days we ought either to fast from food—keep them as designed, or not have them at all. The worshippers of Thomas Carlyle had an intellectual and devotional feast when lately he was

inaugurated as Rector of the University of Glasgow. The Chelsea prophet was carried by the modern spirit of inspiration to Music Hall, Edinburgh, appeared before his adorning hero-worshippers in very high shirt-collars, and, with hair accumulated upon his "beetling brow," and discoursed in wondrous diction for an hour and a half to an enraptured audience. His advices were full of thought—his views and style quaint and odd, his language far clearer, more natural, and more like that of an ordinary being endowed with strong common sense, than is to be found in his writings generally, and his spirit far more reverent than we should have expected. Truly he is a vigorous old man—a man capable of great efforts at seventy, and a credit to the nation—a man, the foundation of whose mind is truly Scottish, though deeply imbued with German literature—a Scottish granite mountain, covered with the clouds and mists, and odd fantastic forms of German thought, philosophical, poetical, and biographical.

WITH reference to the Church at Home, we would direct attention to the statistical calculations published in this number as to the respective numerical strength of the different religious bodies in Scotland. It is the most satisfactory calculation on the subject that we have seen, and, the dates being given, it is presented in such a form, that any one disputing the conclusions has access to the premises. In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, the Church of Scotland has a much larger number of adherents than all the other Presbyterian bodies. So that the frequently uttered predictions of the early downfall of the Church as established, are not likely to be fulfilled in our day. No power *without* can injure the Church, if she will only be true to herself, and advance in every good work, proving herself a blessing to Scotland and the world.

THE proceedings of the Presbytery of Glasgow, with reference to Dr. McLeod, are thus described in the *Glasgow Herald*:—"The subject was discussed at considerable length, with closed doors, and, as we have been informed, took, in the first place, the form of a motion for a committee to confer with the reverend Doctor on some portions of his published speech, which were presumed to be opposed to the Confession of Faith, the motion being made by Mr. Munro of Campsie, and seconded by Dr. Park, of Cadder. Mr. Charteris moved as an amendment that no committee be appointed, and that whatever proceedings took place in the matter should come before the Presbytery as a body. This was seconded by Mr. McGregor, of the Tron, and on a division was carried by twenty-four votes to eleven. Thereafter the Presbytery considered Dr. McLeod's speech, and at last unanimously agreed to record on their min-