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THE MONTH.

THE Conservative Ministry has been formed. The Marquis of Salisbury is First Lord of the Treasury and Prime Minister, the Earl of Iddesleigh being Foreign Secretary. Lord Randolph Churchill, Chancellor of the Exchequer, leads the House of Commons, Sir M. Hicks-Beach having accepted the post of Irish Secretary. The Marquis of Londonderry is Lord-Lieutenant.

There have been deplorable riots in Belfast.

The question of Imperial Federation has been brought prominently forward, and Lord Salisbury made an encouraging reply to an influential deputation from the I. F. League.

The meeting of the Emperor Frederick William and the Emperor Francis Joseph, at Gastein, with their Chancellors, Prince Bismarck and Count Kalnoky, has caused great enthusiasm throughout Germany and Austria.

At the Brighton gathering of the British Medical Association, the President, Dr. Withers Moore, raised the question of the over-education of women. He said :

Is it for the good of the human race, considered as progressive, that women should be trained and admitted to compete with men in the ways and walks of life, from which heretofore (as unsuited to their sex) they have been excluded by feeling and usage, and largely, indeed, by actual legislation? Will it be well that we should have female doctors and divines, lawyers, mathematicians and astronomers, professors, publicists, and Ministers of State? . . . Do the "rights of women," does "justice to women," demand it? Do the "duties of women" (due to the whole human race, and to their own sex and selves as a part of that whole) admit it? The old chivalrous ideal, certainly, was a very different one. It was that sweat of the brow and sweat of the brain should be mainly masculine—that man should go forth to adventure and achievement, "to his work and to his labour until the evening," while woman should wait at home and welcome him back again, and lend her ear to his tale of doing or of suffering, and reward him with her gentle sympathy and loving appreciation—

She loved me for the dangers I had passed ;
And I loved her that she did pity them.

To the men of "the old time before us" those words of Othello's seemed merely natural. Their thought was, not that woman should have her fair chance with man in the battle of life, but that she should be shielded and sheltered from that rude battle, if possible, altogether; that man should fight it for her. But, if we are to "change all that," then those who enter into the conflict where cuffs are going—man or woman—must be content to be cuffed and to cuff back again; and the age of chivalry and chivalrous courtesy (so far as woman is concerned), with all which

that courtesy did to make life noble and beautiful, must indeed be held finally to have passed away.

Dr. Withers-Moore next laid before his hearers his reasons for replying in the negative to the question proposed :

I think that it is not for the good of the human race [he said] considered as progressive, that women should be freed from the restraints which law and custom have imposed upon them, and should receive an education intended to prepare them for the exercise of brain-power in competition with men. And I think this because I am persuaded that neither the preliminary training for such competitive work, nor the subsequent practice of it in the actual strife and struggle for existence, can fail to have upon women the effect of more or less (and rather more than less) indisposing them towards and incapacitating them for their own proper function—for performing the part, I mean, which (as the issue of the original differentiation of the sexes) nature has assigned to them in the maintenance and progressive improvement of the human race. This "higher education" will hinder those who would have been the best mothers from being mothers at all, or, if it does not hinder them, more or less it will spoil them. And no training will enable themselves to do what their sons might have done. Bacon's mother (intellectual as she was) could not have produced the *Novum Organum*, but she—perhaps she alone—could and did produce Bacon.

Canon Westcott has been preaching, in Westminster Abbey, some remarkable sermons on "Aspects of Social Life."

The Bishop of Rochester, we gladly note, has appointed Mr. L. T. Dibdin Chancellor of the Diocese.¹ Mr. Dibdin's "Church Courts" was reviewed, in warm terms, in *THE CHURCHMAN* of October, 1882, by that eminent ecclesiastical lawyer, Mr. Droop. Mr. Dibdin's paper on Pews in *THE CHURCHMAN* of last June attracted much attention.

Due tributes of respect have been paid to the memory of the Rev. Daniel Wilson.

Is British Methodism fading away? A short time since, says the *Record*, we reprinted from the *Methodist Times* an article which boldly declared that Wesleyanism "has been weighed in the balance and found wanting!"

There was, the *Methodist Times* went on to confess, a decrease in the number of persons meeting in society classes; the income of the Mis-

¹ Mr. Dibden was called to the Bar in May, 1876, by Lincoln's Inn, and has ever since practised in the Chancery and Ecclesiastical Courts. Mr. Dibdin was summoned to give evidence before the recent Ecclesiastical Courts Commission. In 1882 he published "Church Courts, an Historical Inquiry" (Hatchards). In 1884 he edited an essay on "The Royal Supremacy," by Sir Matthew Hale, which until then had remained in MS. in Lincoln's Inn library. In 1885 he edited Brewer's "Endowments and Establishment" (Murray), and in the present year he has published, through Messrs. Hamilton and Co., "The Livery Companies of London." Mr. Dibdin is also a writer in the *Quarterly Review*, to which he has contributed, amongst other articles, a paper on the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission (October, 1883).—*Record*.

sionary Societies—both home and foreign—was said to be going down ; the funds of other agencies were also diminishing ; and, worst of all, the Theological Colleges were half empty. The picture is a gloomy one ; but it must be remembered that Mr. Hugh Price Hughes's organ notoriously studies effect, and therefore, without the least desire to cast a slur on our contemporary, it seems reasonable to turn to other and more matter-of-fact sources of information before accepting this melancholy verdict. The Wesleyans have been assembled in Council for more than a fortnight, and the deliberations of the Representative Conference, which includes ministers and laity, are still proceeding. The Pastors' Conference terminated on Saturday last, so that we can gather their opinion as to the position and prospects of the Wesleyan body. It is needless to say there is no such sweeping condemnation of the past as that in which our contemporary indulges, but there is throughout the proceedings evidence of a sense of failure, or at any rate weakness, and of the necessity for some extraordinary effort, if Wesleyanism is to hold its own and to be the power for good in the future that it has undoubtedly been in years gone by. . . . Statistics are proverbially unreliable means for testing the real effect of any movement, and when applied to work the full result of which can only be known in eternity, they should, no doubt, be received with great reserve. But after making all due allowance for this uncertainty, it would seem from the statistics presented to the Conference last Friday by the Rev. J. W. Greeves, that the note of alarm has been sounded not a moment too soon. The state of the Wesleyan Methodist districts in Great Britain at the close of the year showed a net decrease in numbers of 778, and this too at a time when it is universally conceded that the amount and power of Christian work and Christian activity are greatly increased and constantly increasing. But this decrease is not, for Methodists, the most alarming feature in Mr. Greeves's figures. If we read them aright there has been a withdrawal of 27,135 members from the community during the year. True, there has been an accession of 45,230 new members, but the falling away of more than half that number presents a problem that demands immediate solution at the hands of the leaders of the community. The Pastors' Conference was better attended this year than ever before, and it is strange that no practical reason was given for so large a secession.

The centenary of the publication of the first edition of the poems of Burns has been celebrated at Kilmarnock.

The Convocation of Canterbury was opened in St. Paul's Cathedral on the 6th, the Dean of Canterbury preaching the sermon.

The Convocation of York was opened by Canon Lord Forester (as Commissioner for the Archbishop). Canon Fleming, we are pleased to record, has been chosen to represent the York Chapter.

We regret to record the death of the Ven. Edward Birch, Vicar of Blackburn.

An Oxford Layman's Church Defence League has been formed.

At the Annual Meeting of the Church Defence Institution an admirable speech was made by Mr. Bosworth Smith.

The Rev. Dr. Dowden has been elected Bishop of Edinburgh.

The Bishop of London has appointed the Right Rev. Dr. Wilkinson, formerly Bishop of Zululand, to supervise the Chaplaincies on the Continent, in succession to Bishop Titcomb. The resignation of Bishop Titcomb, from ill-health, has been received with very great and general regret.

At the Bangor Diocesan Conference, after papers on Parochial Missions had been read, the Bishop explained the reason why the subject had been selected for discussion :

Two months ago he, with three other Bishops, at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, went to Lambeth Palace with the object of discussing the condition of the Welsh Church. It was there that the question of having parochial missions throughout the Principality was mooted, and adopted unanimously. Their intention in that diocese was to have retreats for the clergy from the 11th to the 16th October, to which the clergy should be invited, and spend the time in spiritual exercises and such counsels as might tend to the subsequent efficiency of the more general missions to be held in the diocese. Mr. Morgan (in his paper) had told them how much previous preparation was required in order to fit a parish for the reception of the mission, and therefore missions would not be held until early next year. It was their duty to set everything in order as soon as possible. Every clergyman present should lay this to heart, that he would not be able to stand the scrutiny of the last day who could not, in the face of public opinion, say to his people, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." Before any clergyman brought a missioner into his parish he hoped he would labour to bring his people into the frame of mind best fitted to receive that mission ; and they trusted that when that missioner had left there might be in their respective parishes a sermon continually preached by a Christian community carrying out in their daily lives the holy lessons they had learned in the house of God. A diocesan committee for carrying out the parochial missions had been already formed, and he hoped it would soon be actively engaged.

The question of Church Finance, as we have often said in *THE CHURCHMAN*, is sure to come to the front. Canon Hoare, at the Canterbury Diocesan Conference, spoke in strong terms of the pecuniary condition of rural parishes ; and it is becoming more and more evident that "*something must be done!*" Local Taxation needs serious consideration, from the stand-point of the tenant farmer (or landlord) and the Rector. The *Guardian* (of the 18th) says truly :

The extent to which benefices have suffered by the agricultural depression is as yet little appreciated outside the ranks of the rural clergy. They alone know the heavy losses of income, the despairing efforts to find a way of escape in what is at best the unsuitable work of farming their glebe, and the pain of discovering in the end that they have only added the burden of debt to the burden of poverty.

