

## Scotch Notes.

THE eighth centenary of the death of St. Margaret, which occurs in November 1893, will be celebrated by the opening of a church under her invocation at Dumfermline. A suitable site was secured some time ago through the generosity of a gentleman since deceased, and preparations for commencing the building including the very necessary one of soliciting subscriptions, are being busily carried on.

The *Glasgow Mail* reports an act of devotion on the part of an English lady visiting the West of Ireland. During an outbreak of a virulent fever at Benvyle in Connemara, she went boldly into one of the worst cabins in the place, where several people lay ill, and personally nursed them day and night, until competent aid to replace her was obtained. This heroic lady, a Miss Mander, the *Mail* adds, had been a witness in the recent trials at Cork, when she was roughly handled by the Crown counsel, in giving evidence as to the conduct of the police at Tipperary court house.

The unfortunate crofters have made another bold move for the recovery of their homes. A party of them recently proceeded from Crossbarry to re-enter on the possession of their confiscated holdings in the deer forest at Park—intending to plant potatoes, rebuild their huts, and live upon venison and fish until the crop was ready to dig. The superior force of the law, however, interfered with the success of the daring plan, and the upshot was that a representative number of the adventurers were sent to gaol. Feeling in the island nevertheless, is strongly in their favour—and if the *vox populi* in this instance speaks the truth the men are the victims of gross injustice. It seems indeed a very flagrant case of the deer against the man.

The ceremony of the profession of a Dominican nun which took place recently at the convent of Our Lady Help of Christians at Orkney, was especially interesting as the first profession in the order, which had occurred in Scotland since the Reformation. The community in question are conducting schools with marked success though in the face of difficulties and opposition.

Some curious revelations with respect to the religious condition of the Highlands have just been made, in the Free Church Synod of Sutherland and Caithness. It appears from the report on religion and morality read on the occasion that godliness and whiskey-drinking are looked upon by the primitive congregations as inseparably connected. Some striking instances of this were quoted, and the sorrowful conclusion was arrived at that an early introduction of total abstinence, or perhaps even of temperance, among the people in question, could not be expected to result in success.

Young Colonials are particularly well represented in the Faculty of Medicine attached to the University of Edinburgh. Out of 1,979 medical students 270 belonged last year to the British Colonies, exclusive of India, which had sent 99.

Jennie Geddes has had a humble imitator at Kirriemuir, where some weeks ago the serenity of the Sabbath worship of a U. P. Kirk was disturbed by a zealous lady. In godly indignation she aimed her Bible at a member of the choir who had so far forgotten himself as to fall asleep during the sermon. Whether the pious dame is to be blamed for an irreverent use of the "unaided Word" or praised for her fervour must be left as a question for the elders of the Kirk to determine. And, indeed, it may form as important a subject as many that divide their attention.

The belief that time is money appears to prevail largely at Campbeltown. The Highland parish minister there complains of the unseasonable hours at which he is commonly called upon to perform the marriage ceremony. Sometimes it is at midnight, sometimes before five o'clock in the morning, the important rite being apparently fixed for a moment when there is nothing else to be done. Or do prudent Scotch lassies insist on taking the ball at the hop, as the saying is?

By the death of Dr. Patrick Stirling of Dunblane, Scotland has recently lost a man who, besides being distinguished as a notary and land agent on an extensive scale, held a very respectable place in the world of letters. In early life he had been a pupil of the famous Dr. Chalmers. A work of his entitled "Gold Discoveries" attained to something like European fame.

The *Scotsman*, of April 18, publishes a leader on the reduction of licences. "Many of the Magistrates at Licensing Courts," it says, "unquestionably believe that they are doing a good thing in the cause of temperance by reducing the number of licences. They are mistaken. They are simply increasing the value of the monopoly in the

hands of those whose licences are maintained." The writer quotes in proof of his argument, the condition of things in Edinburgh. "In 1888," he says, "there were 803 licences granted in the city. In 1890, there were 769—that is, the licences had been reduced by 34. In 1888, the total number of people apprehended was 5,996. In 1890 the number was 6,336. Of these the number who were drunk when they were apprehended was 3,932 in 1888, and 4,306 in 1890. Still further the number of persons found drunk and incapable in the streets was, in 1888, 2,190, and in 1890 it was 2,235." In reply to the objection that the difference was caused by the increase in the population, the writer states that the percentage to population both of apprehensions and drunkenness was higher in 1890 than it had been in 1888. "There is no possibility of mistaking these figures," he adds. "They show as plainly as anything can show that there is no reduction in drunkenness caused by the reduction in licences." The writer pursues his investigations at some length, tracing the state of the case since the year 1854, and always with similar results. His conclusion is the following:—"The lesson is one that ought to be taken to heart. Let those who are urging that injustices should be done to honest men who have invested their money in a business sanctioned by the law think what they are doing. They have a good object. They wish to reduce drunkenness. All the figures go to show that the result of their action is not the attainment of their object. Education will help them; restriction will not."

It is much to be feared that Scotland bids fair to lose her time-honoured reputation for piety. At least if the state of affairs prevalent in Dundee is to be taken as typical, and some who ought to know say it is so, a very melancholy prospect opens before us. A census has just been taken by the staff of the *Dundee Advertiser* relative to the attendance at the city churches, with the result that a woeful falling off is shown as compared with that was the custom ten years ago. Then the attendance at forenoon worship numbered close upon 31,000; now it amounts to little more than 24,000. The number of churches meantime has increased from 85 to 94—four meeting houses or barracks of the Salvation Army being reckoned among them. The percentage to population of church-goers ten years ago was 22; to-day it is 15. If, therefore, as we have said is probably the case, this state of thing applies to the whole country the downward path upon which Scotland has set out is evident. The Scotch people, in fact, are losing one of their distinctive powers of physical and moral endurance—that of sitting out with patience and even some feeling of stolid contentment a service of the Presbyterian kirk. How far the national character is otherwise destined to degenerate remains to be seen.

An evidently authoritative exposition of the budget of the Vatican has been published by a Catholic Munich paper. The Sovereign Pontiff's annual expenditure for his own household, and for all matters not comprised under the other departments, amounts to £20,000. The Sacred College is maintained on £28,000; poor dioceses receive a subvention of £18,000; for the Apostolic Palaces His Holiness is at a charge of £72,000; the State Secretariate costs £40,000, and the salary of functionaries and officials £60,000; schools and charities are supplied by £48,000.

It is stated that Barnum has died worth 5,000,000dols. The cause of death was old age, as he had no organic disease. For twenty-one weeks he had been struggling against death. For several hours before his death he was unable to speak, but he gave occasional glances of recognition to the friends around him. The "Greatest Show on Earth" will be continued, as 3,500,000dols. are invested in it. According both to Mr Barnum's will and the articles of partnership with Mr Bailey, who has been responsible for most of the business done in Mr Barnum's name in recent years, a generous provision has been made for all dependents. His chief heir is a grandson, who will have a fortune that is estimated at 5,000,000dols. Here is a characteristic story told of Barnum during his last visit to England: "Well, Mr Barnum," said an illustrious personage to the great showman at the Agricultural Hall, as the Household troops went by in a musical ride, "would you not like to run the Life Guards in the States?" "Sir," he answered, "I have no desire to run the Life Guards; but I will give good terms to be allowed to run your Royal Highness."—*Cork Examiner*.

Mr Spurgeon, who occasionally reviews books himself in his *Sword and Trowel*, has been picking the tit bits for his readers out of Mr Woodcock's "Primitive Methodism on the Yorkshire Wolds." The pastor of the Tabernacle is particularly pleased with Yorkshire criticism of sermons. Here is one of them: "Ah say, Mister, you preached a goodish sermon to-night; but if it had been cut short at both ends, and set a-fire in the middle, it wad a dean us mere good." Mr Spurgeon "scarcely remembers a better criticism than this," and says it might be applied to many of the discourses and speeches which one hears nowadays. Another story tells of a not very fluent young man who, being in the habit of saying in his prayers "Lord, help me to pray," was answered one night by an old man's ejaculation, "And the Lord help thee to give over." "How heartily," remarks Mr Spurgeon, "could we say 'Amen' to such a prayer in the case of a long-winded brother." Mr Spurgeon also likes the story of the clergyman who at a noisy prayer-meeting commanded silence and said, "My dear friends, the Lord is not deaf. Now, don't you think you could pray a little more quietly? You remember, when the temple was being built at Jerusalem, there was no sound of any tools heard in it while building." "Yes, Sir," said one of the brothers, "that's all very true; but you see we're not building the temple, we're blasting the rocks."