

Religious Intelligence.

BIBLE SOCIETY, MISSIONARY, AND SABBATH SCHOOL ADVOCATE.

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That God in all things may be glorified

though Jesus Christ—PETER.

TERMS.—ONE

DOLLAR A YEAR, IN ADVANCE

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WHOLE NO. 180

The Missionary Spirit of the Christian Religion Illustrated in the Progress of Christianity from its rise to the present time.

CENTURY XIII.—The thirteenth century affords few records of missionary labor. It was, however, distinguished by the institution of the Order of the Franciscans.

Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscans, undertook a mission to Palestine himself, and sent several monks of his order as missionaries into Germany, Greece, France, England, and the Moors in Spain.

The Dominicans of Spain applied themselves to the oriental languages and rabbinical literature, and were employed by the king of Spain in the instruction of the numerous Jews and Saracens, who resided in his dominions. Both the Franciscans and the Dominicans sent out many persons as missionaries to various countries; but the most of them were more solicitous to make proselytes to the Romish Church than to teach their converts the scriptural way of Salvation.

The Waldenses and Albigenses, in this century, were distinguished witnesses for the truth—the martyrs of the age; and though compelled to maintain a defensive, rather than aggressive position, yet they did much to prepare the way for the reformation, by the secret diffusion of the Gospel among the nominal Christians of Europe. But the records of their labors are scanty, and they do not come properly under the denomination of missions to the heathen. And this century furnishes little more, in the way of missions to the heathen, than details of military conquests, by which heathen nations were compelled to yield a nominal conformity to the Church of Rome.

CENTURY XIV.—Wickliffe, "the Morning Star of the Reformation," rendered the fourteenth century a remarkable epoch in the history of the Church, by the interperity and success with which he contended against the errors and the corruptions of the Church of Rome, and by his translation of the Scriptures into what was, at that time, the vernacular tongue of England, though now utterly obsolete. The followers of Wickliffe, generally called Lollards, among whom Sir John Oldcastle, otherwise called Lord Cobham, were anxious to diffuse as extensively as possible, the doctrines promulgated by their learned anti-papal chief. They expended considerable sums in collecting and transcribing (printing not having been invented), and dispersing the works of Wickliffe, and in maintaining a number of itinerant preachers, who preached in churches and market-places, particularly in the dioceses of Canterbury, London, Rochester, and Hereford. Bale says that Lord Cobham caused all the works of Wickliffe to be copied by the desire of John Huss, and to be sent into France, Spain, Bohemia, and other foreign countries. Queen Anne of Bohemia favored the adherents of Wickliffe; possessing and constantly reading the Gospels in four languages, Bohemian, German, Latin, and English. Many of her attendants imbibed the same opinions, and on their return to Bohemia, after her decease in 1394, carried with them the writings of Wickliffe and his disciples; by which means they were widely dispersed, and produced a powerful anti-papal influence, not only in Bohemia, but also in other neighboring states.

CENTURY XV.—The fifteenth century was rendered remarkable by many important events, which, though not strictly missions, yet in their influence, have in some cases so greatly forwarded, and in others so greatly retarded, the progress of the Gospel, that we may justly glance at their occurrence and character. One of these was the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus, in 1492, and the subsequent landing of the Portuguese Amerigo Vesputius, in Brazil; a second was the discovery of the passage to India by sea, by Vasco de Gama, in 1497; and another was the ruin of the Greek empire, in the taking of Constantinople by the Turks, 1453.—By the first of these events, an immense extent of country was eventually placed under the control of the Roman Catholic princes of Spain and Portugal; and hence these kingdoms were induced to make extraordinary and ultimately successful efforts, to introduce and establish Popery, in its most superstitious and degrading forms, throughout the continent of South America, and the kingdom of Mexico. By the discovery of a passage to India, by doubling the Cape of Good Hope, the intercourse between England and the East Indies was greatly facilitated; the previous routes having been through Egypt and Persia; and, by the overthrow of the Greek empire, many learned men fled for security into various European states, and, by the diffusion of literature and science, prepared the way for the Reformation of the following century. But, probably, no occurrence of this age proved of greater interest than the invention of Printing, by Guttenberg and his associates, and successors, about the middle of this century; the slow and expensive mode of transcription being the only way previously known of multiplying copies of books, however valuable. But, by the invention of this useful art, and the improvements of later times, copies of valuable works can be rapidly and cheaply multiplied; and millions of persons have by this means been furnished with the Holy Scriptures, who, otherwise, would have remained destitute.

The military expeditions of the Papists continued during this century, and some of them, among which were those of Don Henry,

Duke of Visco, (Portugal,) and Grand Master of the Order of Christ, were productive of important results, in the way of maritime discoveries, &c.; but the events of this century, of a purely missionary character, were few and comparatively ineffectual. In the East, the Nestorian Patriarch, who resided in Chaldea, sent missionaries in Cathay and China, who were empowered to exercise episcopal authority over the Christian assemblies, which lay concealed in the remote provinces of those great empires, affording a demonstrative proof, that notwithstanding the dreadful persecutions that had been exercised by the dominant authorities against the Nestorian Christians, there were still some churches existing in those regions of darkness.

There were also individuals, whose consistency of conduct and zeal for the dissemination of Christianity in this dark age, entitle them to our notice and admiration. Such, for instance, were the two brothers, Vincent and Boniface Ferrer, Thomas a Kempis and John Wesselus. Vincent Ferrer was a Spaniard by birth; at his own earnest request he was appointed apostolical missionary, by Pope Benedict XIII., and for many years preached with indefatigable ardor in different parts of Europe. He visited Spain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, and at the request of Henry IV., England, Scotland, and Ireland. The usual subjects of his sermons were death, judgment, and eternity. Milner says, that "though bred in the midst of darkness, and connected with the worst of ecclesiastical characters, he was a shining model of piety." He died in 1419, at the age of sixty-two.—Boniface Ferrer, the brother of Vincent, was a zealous preacher of the word of God, and having embraced the monastic life, he successively rose to high official situations, and died prior of the Carthusian monastery of Pontlell, in Valencia, in 1417, after having translated the Scriptures into the Valencian or Catalanian dialect of Spain. Thomas a Kempis, whose piety has received a perpetual monument in his "Christian's Pattern," was born at Chempis or Kempis, in Cologne, in 1380, and became one of the most illustrious members of the society of the "Brethren of the Common Life;" a society founded by Gerard de Groot, who, having retired into a monastery, devoted himself to prayer and the reformation of immoral characters, and instituted a fraternity, having one common property, and earning their livelihood by their pen. Kempis died in 1471, in the ninety-first year of his age. His excellent work, "The Christian's Pattern," has been translated into most of the European languages, and even into Chinese. A beautiful copy of the Bible, transcribed by him, is preserved in the library of the regular canons, at Cologne. John de Capistrano may be added as an instance of the activity and energy of the pious, though mistaken, missionary agents of the Romish church. He was a Franciscan friar, of a wealthy Neapolitan family, and was sent to convert the Bohemians, and to preach in Saxony, Misnia, and Moravia, and is said to have been everywhere received with banners, crosses, and processions, like a sovereign prince. He is said to have preached at Erford to 60,000 persons, the men being arranged on one side and the women on the other. When ignorant of the language, he was assisted by an interpreter, who explained what he delivered to the people. His sermons were accompanied with violent action, so that he is said to have "preached with his hands and his feet as well as with his voice," which corresponds with the accounts given of him by an English historian, who relates that "he itinerated through the cities and towns, addressing sermons to the people, in the highways and market places, against the enemies of the Romish Church. Among the Germans and those that were ignorant of the Italian, he is said to have affected the minds of his audience in a wonderful manner, by using gesticulations instead of words."

To be continued.

The Bible against Infidelity.

The following passage from a speech by the Rev. Newman Hall, before the last meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, illustrates the fact that ignorance of what the Bible teaches is the fruitful source of infidelity, and that a knowledge of Bible truth, is the best defense of the Bible's claims.—[Ed. Int.]

I was strolling one Sunday afternoon, in a populous part of London, and I saw over a hall of assembly a notice to the effect that a debate was then going on with reference to the claims of the Bible on the respect of man as to its moral teachings. I entered; the audience was composed, I believe, exclusively of men, and chiefly of the class of artisans. A young man was in the rostrum telling us he had been for years a diligent student of the Scriptures, and that he had come to the conclusion that they were false. He made certain quotations, and then went on to say that the wisest of all men become an Atheist and died an Atheist, having written a book to show that men perished like the beast, and that one event happened both to the righteous and to the wicked. He was succeeded by another, who referred to the lying spirit sent forth into the prophets of Ahab, as an objection to the morality of the Scriptures; and said that the Bible was full of immorality from one end to the other. The meeting being an open one I walked up and took my place at the rostrum. (Applause.) I was

gratified and somewhat surprised at the earnest cheering which accompanied my occupation of the desk. I began my address somewhat in this fashion: "If I were to condemn you thoughtful inquiring-looking men with being infidels, and if I were to regard your presence here as saying that the book which has been honored and loved for centuries by rich and poor, by wise and unlearned, is a false book, I should very much misrepresent you. Though some of you may be determined in your opposition to this book, I believe that a great proportion of you are earnest inquirers; and while you have objections to all the different modes in which the Gospel is set before you in our churches, you want to know what the book itself teaches, and you have come here with earnest and honest hearts trying to find out what is right." The response with which that statement was received proved to me that I had rightly read their hearts, and that it would be wrong coldly and harshly to censure as infidels all who seem to put themselves in the position of inquiry. (Applause.) I then referred to some objections which had been brought before the meeting. I said, "That gentleman who has been talking to you tells us that he has been for years a diligent student of the Scriptures; but what will you say when I tell you that the book from which he has quoted, however excellent a book, is not the Bible at all? And then, as to the wisest of men dying an infidel, and writing a book in his last years to disprove religion, that man was Solomon, and that book the Book of Ecclesiastes, which contains the confession of a converted atheist, and concludes with these words, 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.' Referring to the other gentleman who sat below me, I said, 'He has alluded to the lying spirit sent forth into the prophets of Ahab. Surely we should not be astonished if God in all ages of the world has punished wicked men by allowing themselves to be misled; and if there are some of you here determined to not know God's truth, you have only had before you what they had in ancient days; for I have been proving to you that those who profess to be your teachers and guides know nothing of the book which they profess to explain, and this is nothing more than a recurrence of what is always going on—if men will not take pains to go right, they will be judicially misled.' Though that statement was not at all relished by the gentleman who had preceded me, I assure you it was taken up most enthusiastically by the audience, who seemed indignant that they had been so misled. And then as to the question of immorality, I said, 'Immorality! Look at this book. Immorality from Genesis to Revelation! Look at the law of Moses, delivered when all the world was in a state of corruption; look at the wickedness of the Egyptians, one of which Israelites had come; think of the tyranny of the priesthood, all which tyranny was knocked down at a blow by the declaration that there is but one God. Call that a book full of immorality! Where was there such morality taught as by Moses in the ancient days of the world? But come to more recent times; come to the Psalms and the old prophets. You call yourselves Liberals, defenders of freedom, and assailants of oppression. Where is there so glorious an ode to liberty as that Psalm which was read at the commencement of this meeting—the King that shall rule in righteousness, that shall judge the poor of the people, and break in pieces the oppressor? Oh, ye that will not look at the Bible, know that it is your own book, it is the book of the people, it is the book of the poor, it should be your household book, and the book of your hearts. Then come to the New Testament. Look at Jesus, the founder of our religion: why he was born a poor man, he worked at a carpenter's bench, as some of you perhaps have, till he was thirty years old, to prove the dignity of obscure toil. He chose His disciples from amongst the working men, to show that while He gave the glories of His religion to the highest and noblest, they were offered equally to the poorest and the humblest. Take His teaching; look at the Sermon on the Mount, see how it begins, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are the peacemakers; blessed are the merciful.' Oh! if this religion that tells us to do to others as we would they should do to us, were the religion of the world, what a millennium would it once draw upon us, what a glorious socialism of divine brotherhood should we then experience.' Then I said, in conclusion, something of this kind—'We, who love our Bible, love our different organizations and our different churches; but we love the Bible better. We do not want to proselyte you; we do not care if you come to our particular church or not; what we want you to do is to take this book and read it, and love the Saviour who is preaching in this book, in whom there is no fault, though in all of us there is prodigious fault. Find not fault with us who preach, and with our churches, but let us look to the book; for if we are in fault our own book condemns us. Be ye lovers of the Bible, and be ye followers of Christ, and we care not whether you belong to our particular church or not.' (Applause.) My time had expired; ten minutes being allowed to each speaker. At the expiration of that time some one proposed a vote of thanks to me for coming amongst them; and it was suggested that I should be allowed to go on and address them for another ten minutes. The manner in which this was received was a

proof to me that we have only, in a kind and friendly spirit, to explain what the Bible does teach, and multitudes that we think to be hardened infidels we should find to be ready and grateful to receive God's Word. (Applause.) So I went on to speak to them, in words which I shall, mingle with a few thoughts with which I shall close my address. Speak about charters! There never was such a charter for working men as the Bible. What would all legislations and constitutions ever do for the working classes like one single thing given to them by this charter—the Sabbath-day rest in all ages? It is the best charter of the poor man's rights. It is the most impartial code of laws. Do you complain that it protects the property of the millionaire? This same book that protects him in his property protects you in yours, and in your honest earnings; and the penny of the poor man is as precious to the Author of that book as the pound or the thousand pounds of the rich man. Does it call upon servants to be obedient to their masters? It calls upon masters to render to their servants that which is just and equal. Does it call upon you, if you would live, to work and labour, and by the sweat of your brow to earn your bread? Then it also condemns those who grind down the poor in their wages, and tells them that they shall give a terrible account, who, having the means, do not pay their tradesmen's bills, and thus expose the poor to misery and want. Behold the voice of those, whose wages are kept back, cried aloud, and the voice of those who have wept, cometh into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. Does this book tell you that you are to honour the Queen, and pay tribute to whom tribute is due? The same book says the Queen is to honour you, for it says, 'Honour all men.' Yes; and if her Majesty and the poorest street-sweeper were to address in prayer the same God, they must come in the same language, and say, 'Our Father.' For however different their stations here, in the sight of God street-sweeper and Queen lose all distinction, and are both recognised by him as brethren; and, therefore, this book teaches us to recognise and care for one another as brethren of one family. Oh! what a blessed book is this, what privileges does it give to the poor! How it tells the poorest, as well as the richest, that there is free and full forgiveness! How it goes to the very lowest depths of misery and vice, and the loving hand of Jesus is stretched down so low, that those who are most sunk may be lifted up by it!

Oh! how it shows the poorest that he may have the privilege of calling upon God as his Father, and that by and by he shall dwell with him, and wear a spotless robe and golden crown, and have a place in the palace of the great King for ever and ever! Oh! this is the book of the poor. How it comforts lowly homes, what unnamed heroes it makes in humble cottages, in the conflict with temptation! What unmentioned martyrs in the patient endurance of trial! The rose that climbs up the cottage door, sheds abroad its beauties and its fragrance as cheerfully as if it grew in the Queen's garden. And the open Bible, however plain its binding, upon the table of the cottage, is a brighter ornament than anything the palace may contain besides. The sun that sparkles from the windows of Windsor Castle is reflected just as promptly and brightly from the casement window of the garret through which the eye of faith is looking to a God of love. And the volume which our Queen values above all other volumes, is so prized by thousands of her meanest subjects, they would think it a poor exchange, to give up that book for all the splendours of that palace without it. And it makes them endure, with cheerfulness, pain and poverty, anointing by the glorious hope that it inspires. This book of the poor—oh! it bestows a wealth that outvalues gold, a dignity which no earthly patent of nobility can give! This book of the poor—oh! it consecrates the hovel and makes it a solemn temple; it animates kings and priests unto God. It shows that to the very meanest abode there is a ladder let down, upon which the humblest and the poorest are invited to climb; while the angels and Jesus are at the top, inviting them to come and rejoice with them for ever. Oh! there was a pauper visited, in the union workhouse by a kind gentleman, who was commiserating on account of his low condition. "Sir," said he, taking off his cap respectfully, "do not pity me, I am the son of a king, I am a child of God, and when I die angels will take me straight from this union workhouse up to the court of heaven." Yes, we may say with the poet Nichol, the poet of the working-class—

Thou doubly precious book,
Unto thy light, what doth not Britain owe?
Thou teachest age to die,
And youth, in truth unsullied, up to grow.
In lonely homes, a comfort art thou,
A sunbeam sent from God, an everlasting bow?

"THE BOTTLE IN THE SMOKE."—For I am become like the bottle in the smoke, yet do not I forget thy statutes." Psalm cxi, 83.

When long exposed to the heat and smoke of the tent, the eastern bottle becomes hard, shriveled, and unsightly. I have one with this appearance now lying before me, which a friend of mine carried through the desert, slung at his camel's bow by day, and which he suspended in his tent at night. To a bottle on which the heat and smoke has had its effect, David compares himself, in consequence of the effects of age, suffering, and sorrow.—Dr. Anderson.

Correspondence

London Correspondence.

LONDON, May 22nd, 1857.

The Royal Family.

The Royal Family has been separated of late. Her Majesty has resorted to the marine infirmary of Osborne House, to complete her convalescence; three of her sons, including the heir apparent, have been to the Westmorland Lakes, where the Prince of Wales has been lectured by a rural dame for chasing her sheep; and Prince Alfred is travelling on the continent, the last news relating to his visit to the Belgian Court, where he has been received with the honours due to the heir-presumptive of the British throne. Meanwhile the aged Duchess of Gloucester has hardly been laid in the tomb before Parliament is called upon to hear a message on the projected marriage of the Princess Royal with her Prussian suitor, second in succession to the crown of that monarchy. To-night the Commons will be required to say what they will give, and how—whether in the shape of annuity or once for all. The latter is the favourite idea, and, if adopted, will probably put £150,000 into the young lady's hand on her wedding morning. The case of Leopold and others has set the public mind against yearly pensions, which bleed the exchequer for a burdensome length of years. Glib rumour has it that the Queen will ask nothing for her sons' marriage dowries, but depends on the national gallantry for portioning her daughters. John Bull will not beiggardly when appealed to in a decorous manner; he hates to be duped, revolts at being bullied, but is softened— is apt, indeed, to be too soft—when his large purse and larger heart are pointed to with a beseeching finger.

Parliamentary.

Parliament is getting into working gear.—Sixty-five petitions against election returns for fifty-three places have been presented, and will keep as many representatives on the thorns till they are decided. The notorious George Hudson, the deposed railway-king, has been objected to on the score of defective (property) qualification! How times have changed with him, since he led high-born ladies to the dance!

Among the subjects discussed by the House of Commons, have been the Navy Estimates.—Mr. Dillay's Bill for increasing the punishment of persons convicted of aggravated assaults on women and children, (which was lost).—Minister's Money, (an Irish question on which the Government beat the Opposition by upwards of 100 majority, the effect being to free six Irish towns from contributing to the Irish Episcopal Church).—and last night Mr. Spooner's annual Mayothon motion, which was strangled in its first movements by a vote of 125 to 91. Bills of importance still in progress, including one by Lord Robert Grosvenor, for throwing the cost of election expenses on the counties or boroughs, and rendering the payment of carriage hire by candidates illegal. Rather singular that such a measure, which will be a boon to all poor candidates and will favour democratic aspirants, should have been proposed by a wealthy member of the wealthiest aristocracy in the world. Mr. Hardy has re-introduced his Bill for placing the future licensing of Beer-shops in the hands of magistrates—a doubtful step, considering how feebly the magistrates exercise supervision over the public houses, and how they are implicated as owners of property in some of the worst abuses of the liquor traffic. The Attorney General has also obtained leave for bringing in a Bill to render violations of trust criminally indictable. He has been urged to this by the exposure of the Royal British Bank disaster, and if the operation of the new Act will be retrospective, the directors of that institution will have to banish themselves to serene impunity from legal persecution. The Bankruptcy Commissioner pointedly advised such a change of law as would enable them to be prosecuted, if the existing law would not support an action. In making his speech the Attorney General noticed several anomalies which might justify the notion that the statistics were contrived to impede and not expedite the course of justice, as for instance—"if one borrowed a horse to go to Richmond, and he went to Richmond, and he then sold the horse, that was no larceny, but if he broke open the hamper and stole a bottle, that was a theft." Well might Sir R. Bethell say, that "the law had never been happy in general definitions," not, as it would seem, in some particular applications.

The question of the Ballot has yet to be taken up, and with this comes the subject of Parliamentary oaths, in the charge of the Premier himself. The substance of this Bill is simply to do away with the old forms of oaths, having reference to Queen Elizabeth and King William the Third's days, and to substitute another form of oath, clear, exact, and short. It so happens that one of those old oaths contains the clause "in the faith of a true Christian," which excludes Jews from sitting in Parliament, and this clause is proposed to omit from the new form of oath. Lord John Russell has given the matter up to the Government, and as Mr. Disraeli is in its favour, the vote of the Commons will, no doubt, be strongly in its favour—so strong as to enable

the Lords to consent, after some demur, to its adoption.

The new Speaker has not been required, as yet, to exercise his authority in suppressing the misconduct of members, old or new. The House can scarcely be said to form a "happy family" but a gentlemanly feeling and the force of circumstances, keep things pretty even, and save it from the disgrace of those personal assaults, which have rendered the Congress of the United States a reproach among the nations. Besides these other questions, there "looms" in the distance the subject of Representative Reform. Mr. Disraeli, not having the restraints of office to trammel his tongue, has been dilating on this topic to the farmers of Bucks, the burden of his argument being that the counties are worse represented than the boroughs, and that on no account must the country franchise be extended to parties who have no interest in the cultivation or occupancy of the soil. This runs in the teeth of Mr. Loche King's proposition, to give the county franchise to £10 tenants, not having a vote for boroughs, and reducing the borough rental qualification to £5. It is indeed an anomaly, that inside a borough boundary a certain rental gives a vote, while beyond that boundary thrice the rental gives no vote at all. Mr. Disraeli argues that the counties are unfairly dealt with, because, while there are only 144 county members representing a population of 9,770,000, (1 to 67,883), there are 319 borough members representing a population of 7,144,000, (1 to 22,384)—or allowing for one million population of unrepresented towns in counties, the proportion will be one county member for every 61,000 and one borough member for every 25,000. Hence the boroughs are better off than the counties in the ratio of five to two! So declares the wizard of words, and who can deny it? This is one of the fallacies, and rather transparent ones, with which Mr. Disraeli has amused the public for twenty years. Do the county members represent all the persons residing in the counties?

On Mr. Disraeli's own showing they only, and ought only, to represent those who occupy land, house tenants being excluded, except those who pay high rent under a lease. The former comparison therefore is not between mere population, but between country voters and borough voters—not specimen cases—but one with the object fairly considered. Now the right metropolitan constituencies have an electoral body of 132,777, and are represented by 18 members, while thirteen counties reckoning for Bedfordshire to Gloucester with an electoral body of 133,479 send 46 members to Parliament. Is this just and equal? In fact Mr. Disraeli to make a fair comparison ought to put in one scale all who live by agriculture, and in the other all others who pay house rent, and then he would see how the case stands. Such jugglery will not deceive the people. Parliament will not accept a Reform Bill endorsed by Derby, Disraeli & Co.—They will comparatively distrust the Greeks bringing reform gifts at all.

May Meetings.

In bringing up my report of May meetings from where I left it in my last letter, I must advert to the Ragged School Union meeting, held on the 11th in Exeter Hall, the Earl of Shaftesbury presiding. This Union has 139 Sunday Schools with 18,000 scholars, 100 day schools with 14,700 scholars, and 118 evening schools with 7,500 scholars; these 357 schools are carried on in 157 buildings. The Union has also 132 boys trained into three shoe-black brigades, whose earnings in cleaning boots at 1d. per pair, were £2,981 in the year, of which £1,600 were paid to the lads for board and necessities, and £646 put into Savings' Bank to their credit. The years receipts were £7,824, and expenditure £6,932. Lord Ashley, (the oldest son of the Earl, and now M. P. for Hull,) was introduced, on rising to speak, as one of Lord Shaftesbury's boys. This touch of humor, we may believe, was not without its good result; nothing more enlivens a meeting when judiciously applied.

On Tuesday, 12th, the Congregational Union commenced its London sittings, under the presidency of Rev. A. Jack, who delivered a cordial and conciliatory address. The fermentation arising out of the Lynch controversy has not disappeared, but its claims were excluded almost wholly from the proceedings of the Union. The same morning 400 members and friends of the Young Men's Christian Association were seated at six o'clock in their Hall in Aldersgate Street, and in the evening of the day the Soldiers' Friend Society held its annual meeting, when 170 reports were referred to from agents who had distributed 24,745 tracts, read the Scriptures 12,406 times, and distributed several thousand Bibles. Wednesday, 13th, had an animated meeting in St. Martin's Hall of the Society for the liberation of religion from state control; and in St. Paul's a celebration of the 203rd anniversary festival of the Sons of the Clergy, a society which has distributed in the past year, £16,000 among the widows and single daughters of clergymen. On Wednesday morning Exeter Hall was crowded by the friends of the London City Mission, whose agents number 338, who paid 1,528,162 visits last year, of which 177,463 were to the sick and dying. The tracts distributed were 2,109,375 and the ordinary in-door meetings for prayer and exhortation 22,192. The years receipts were £30,683, a decrease of £1,705 over the previous year's. Next evening, the 15th, the Religious Tract Society opened in the